

THE SACRIFICE



WESTON J. LE MOINE



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THE
SACRIFICE



God! Have Mercy on Me."

THE SACRIFICE

A TRUE STORY

By
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*DEDICATED
TO
THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
AT THE REQUEST OF
THE MAN WHO
RELATED THIS PATHETIC
STORY TO ME*

FOREWORD

Many of us to-day are just beginning the journey of active life.

The book of life lies unopened before us. Its covers are illuminated by the pictures of fancy, and its edges are brilliant with the golden tints of hope. Vainly we strive to loosen this wondrous clasp: 'tis a task which none but the hand of Time can accomplish.

Our greatest aim in life is happiness. In one form or another we are all striving for it, but, unfortunately, there is a tendency to acquire happiness as easily as possible. The end proposed is good, but too often the means employed are of doubtful utility.

THE AUTHOR.

Many lose their balance of mind and become wrecks because they are in want of heart culture. Is the head of more importance than the heart? Such, then, is the outline of the great problem, "Happiness."

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THE SACRIFICE

A TRUE STORY.

How beautiful is youth! How bright it gleams,
With its illusions, aspirations, dreams!
Book of beginnings, story without end.

(Longfellow.

At twilight, the sovereign of one peaceful hour, "l'ennui du soir"; when the birds, exhausted in their periodical flights, have repaired to places of safety, and warble lamentingly, as the shades of night close upon them. It was then, near a gurgling brook, midst ferns and violets, the fragrance of which perfumed the air, enhanced by the freshness of vegetation, that a lad, scarcely past his sixteenth summer, sat in deep solitude, in heavenly, pensive contemplation. Whatever interested him became the subject of long and serious thought. Meditation was his soul's inspiration. He had learned to think and had within him an element of safety found nowhere else. The distant tinkling of the bells of the sheep, as they bleated among the daisies on yonder hill, lingered in his ears, making his meditation more intent and

sublime. He held in his hands a volume of poetical quotations. He loved this book, because, in it, he found friends who knew, friends who were counseling him. It was in these silent studies that he weighed so deeply and conscientiously the great maxim of wisdom of Shakespeare:

“To thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Though young in years, this lad had the mind of a sage, “*esprit naturel*,” and in these day dreams the young enthusiast learned to invest with visible forms the creations of his own fancy.

He elevated his eyes and peered at the little hut sitting among the willows. How poor and lonely it appeared. Tradition had it, that, once upon a time, this haunted hut served as a rendezvous for a band of robbers and murderers. Later, however, the assassins were apprehended and hanged to the sycamore tree which stood by the gate. Consequently the hut was dreaded and evaded by everyone. So strong was the horror that no one cared to occupy it, and, eventually, it was offered to any one who would accept it. The poor but courageous farmer, James Ferry, became the owner. All of this Lewis knew well, because the boys in the village took a special

delight in reminding him of it, with sneers and mockery.

But, thought he, adversity is the touchstone of character. There beats not a heart but has felt the force of affliction. No creature could be more unhappy than a man who had never known affliction and sorrow. How can we exercise the grace of contentment if all things succeed well?

The assurance that, in this humble home, reigned a queen among women, eased his panting heart. In this home, void of grandeur and luxury, was the center of purest affection, where every good principle was fostered and sustained. True it is that around the home circle cluster the happiest and, sometimes, the saddest of recollections of youth. Memories, both bitter and sweet, linger in the chambers of the mind long after those of the busy years of maturity have faded away before the approach of age.

He knew that his humble home was dedicated to love and truth, to all that was tender in feeling and noble and pure in thought, although it was not invested with elegance of upholstery or draperies.

His loving mother, the true worth of womanhood, was striving to attain something for the honor and elevation of her son. She was a woman of true intelligence, and endeavored to inculcate in the mind of her son the real meaning of life, and firmly im-

press him with the true meaning of the saying, "Mine honor is my life; both grow in one."

The summit of his ambition was to go out into the wonderful world—to encourage the weak and suffering—to help others to know themselves. He felt assured that nothing was nobler in the employment of men than to make others happy; to be generous and forgiving to human frailty. Oh! how grand this would be! He had the compassionate disposition which inclines men to pity and to feel the misfortunes of others as his own. It is, of all dispositions, the most amiable, and, though it may not receive much honor, is worthy of the highest.

His father had died when he was but a child, leaving them destitute. He had a faint recollection of him, before the hand of death had taken him away. His poor, courageous mother toiled incessantly, day after day, in order to drive starvation from their door. No one knew the battle that she fought. No one offered her assistance. Only God, in His infinite mercy, sent the Angel of Consolation to comfort them in the hours of need and distress, assuring them that poverty is no disgrace, and He Who is Master Supreme sends the most suffering to those He loves best.

It is to remind us of the virtue of obedience; a virtue so dear to our Saviour, that He practiced it

until death. He felt such excruciating tortures; and did he utter the slightest complaint?

Lewis understood it all. It is one of the mysteries of our life that the noblest gift of God to man is nourished by poverty. No, not in the brilliant salon, furnished with every comfort and elegance; not in the library, fitted and looking out upon a smoothly green lawn and a broad expanse of scenery. But most frequently in adversity and destitution. Poverty is one of the best tests of human quality. A triumph over it is like graduating with honor from some great university. It is a certificate of worthy labor, faithfully performed.

Suddenly the musings of this virtuous youth were broken by the voice of his mother. He instantly rose, strode down the path that led to the stile under the tall elm tree, in the boughs of which sang a mocking bird, using its best crescendo notes.

"Come, my son, and partake of the supper I prepared so hurriedly. See how tempting are these sweet potatoes. I cooked them in the ashes. But now, touch them not," said she, laughingly, "until you have told me what you are thinking about." Taking two potatoes she placed them on his tin plate unnoticed.

His head drooped "à l'abandon." His lips quivered, his mind was vivid with the thoughts he had entertained while in the flowery dell.

"My dear son," looking at him anxiously, "you are sad; you eat sparingly. Come, tell me what your fancies are." Pausing, she repeated her plea. "You are too young to indulge in the seriousness of life. Why do you ponder so? Tell me all, my son, and feel sure that mother will help and enlighten you. Tell me, my boy, what is preying on your mind?"

His heart was full, and he could not speak. He felt choked, and words failed him.

She clasped his hand in hers and said affectionately: "Come, sit here beside me and let your heart be open to mother. *'Elle seule vous abandonnera jamais.'*"

He obeyed, placing his arms around her and uttered, half cryingly: "My dear mother, forgive me if I pain you with what I have to say. You—have been so loving and kind to me—." His voice grew faint and weak. "I—have—concluded—that it—is well-nigh time that I try to better our condition. We are utterly miserable, mother. Our neighbors shun us. No one seems to care for us. The time has come—I can resist no longer. Mother, I wish to go out into this great world and make myself worthy of the esteem of all. Yes," elevating his voice, "things are hard with us. See, what a paltry meal we have. It hurts me—oh! how cutting it is—to see you work incessantly, and for what? How I crave to help you, dear mother."

“Stop; let me think,” cried she, chokingly. “The good dwells in the kingdom of duty; the bad sits on the throne of might. To live truly and nobly is to act energetically. Life is a battle to be fought valiantly, inspired by high and honorable resolve. It means also perseverance. When we see how much can be accomplished in any given direction by the man or woman of but average ability who resolutely perseveres in the course of action adopted as a ruling purpose of their lives, we then arrive at a just estimate of the value of perseverance as a factor in success. Listen, my son. I admit that you have spoken the truth. You have shown how necessary it is to be prudent and industrious. I know we are poverty-stricken. Life is merely a grind to us, but ’tis said ‘Every cloud has a silver lining.’ Therefore, let us trust in Him Who knows best—and some day, perhaps, the hand of Providence will direct our course in life to better days; days upon which we shall look back with hearts all joyful, all peaceful, ‘*jour de joie*.’”

She then placed her hands upon his shoulders and said: “Go, and whatever the responsibility may be, bear it patiently and honestly, but,” arousing herself, “you must be prepared before you enter the busy world. You lack neither will nor courage, dearie, but you are not trained, you haven’t the power, you need education. Not the kind that trains

the mind and poisons the heart. No, but the one that will convince you that it is absolutely necessary that you remain pure in the sight of your God, as you must be in the sight of man."

"Mother! mother!" and the tears dimmed his eyes. "You know I can work; maybe I could work for my schooling. I'll work, and study while I rest. Mother, am I right?"

"Yes, my child, and I'll help you through, with the good will of God." She sat motionless, and finally, in a hurried voice, said: "Listen; I know a certain monk, who is the Abbot of the Monastery (Charité). I have been told that he is charity itself, and has helped a number of young men secure education. I dare not approach any one else, lest I be sent away with sneers."

"But, mother, we're not Catholics. Will he be glad to admit me into the Monastery?" (Opening his eyes in fear and astonishment.)

"Anyway, I shall see what he'll say," she continued. "I have a presentiment that it will be agreeable to him. I know that we are not Catholics, but if he has a heart, and is humane, he will most certainly extend a helping hand. I know that your disposition will help you through."

"Yes, mother; in our present circumstances we are dissatisfied. What is more miserable than discontent? Now, mother, what would become of you?

You will be alone! O! I cannot, no, I must not, leave you alone."

"Do not fear, dear child, mother will be safe. I'll get Aunt Lucindy to come and live with me. She and little Pete will be delighted. Come, now, we have made our plans. Eat your potatoes and drink the milk. It is time for you to go to bed. Sleep will refresh you, and to-morrow we shall see about our journey and quest." She kissed him gently on the brow, led him to his room door, and retired to hers. "La nuit soulage le cœur."

Lewis, of course, meditated upon what the outcome of it all would be. He could not sleep. He sat near the window, deep in thought. Oh! how he wished for the morrow to come! He could bear to live this life no longer. What a terrible ordeal it was! Still, in the depths of his heart he felt a regret to leave the old homestead—the place where he was born and reared. Though people called it the haunted hut, the abandoned cabin, he loved it. He looked upon it as a blessing in his life, for it had served to make him appreciate the beauties of life. Would he be satisfied at the Monastery—to live with the monks? He had heard of the terrible life it was. And yet—was he satisfied with his present life? He moved forward, rested his arms upon the window-sill, and bowed his head. He sat there long in silence, trying to solve it all. After a while he raised his eyes

toward heaven in a desperate effort to find his answer.

The moon, shining with brilliant luster, cast its rays about the hut. The little brook, with its strange gurgling tones, the insect world, seemed to be in one grand revelry, every noise of Mother Nature resounded in his attentive ears, he was charmed with the tumultuous festivities of night.

O! nocturnal darkness, how resplendent in your pleasing nature; how you do bring soothing balm to the wounded spirit, and encourage the broken heart! You ease and help to think—one is free to search his conscience in your presence. What is more restful, more gratifying, than to meditate with you? You contain all requirements of serenity—your skies are adorned with bright and radiant jewels, twinkling always, in significance of light and knowledge of the Savior of mankind. Your coolness and refreshing air bring repose. Who, when overwhelmed with perplexities, tormented with vice, pained with grief, will not find enlightenment, consolation and sympathy in your spiritual and thoughtful instructions? The best of all books is the book of nature, full of variety, interest, novelty and knowledge. The height of the heavens reminds us of the infinite distance between us and our God. Hill and valley, seas and constellations, are but expressions of divine ideas, appealing to the living soul of man. God writes the

Gospel, not in the Bible alone, but on trees and flowers, in clouds and stars. All, in short, speak of the power of the Author.

Lewis' mother, in her shabby but tidy room, was meditating on the words of God: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you." She had confidence that "Whatsoever we shall ask, according to His will. He heareth us."

She closed the Holy Book, buried her face in her hands, with tears streaming down her cheeks. There, in the silence of night, she seemed to hear a supernatural voice whispering: "A wise son maketh a glad father." Memories of her beloved helpmate filled her heart with unspeakable grief. "If he were only here to encourage me! But the hand of death has clutched him from me, and left me to mourn helplessly."

If we could only bridge the gulf between this world of change and the future world of changeless immortality, undoubtedly, it would be the greatest development lying before the present century.

CHAPTER SECOND.

"The greatest friendship of Truth is Time. Her greatest enemy is Prejudice. Her constant companion is Humanity."

"Mis Nellie, I'se dun cum agin; I'se feelin' mity bad to-day—had de misery in ma head de whole nite thru. Please, marm, gib me some ob dat medsin you done gin me yistiday. It revived me quick."

"Poor Aunt Lucindy, why didn't you come for it last night?"

"De Lawd be kind to you, Mis Nellie. Some day He's gwine bless you, for He knows you is a angel. Where am dat boy Lewis? Yonder he is" (seeing him in the barn). "Poor little man; always workin' like a mule. Now, I'se gwine fetch dat nigger o' mine to help dat dere boy feed dem pigs."

She and her boy, Pete, lived a short distance from the Ferry home. She never failed to make her frequent and informal calls at the little hut. Always complaining of this or that, a habit which had become second nature with her, the poor old soul was



“De Good Lord Says When Youse Rite, Step On.”

goodness itself, ever willing to help her white friends. She was a typical African, and it was very amusing to hear her trace her ancestry back to some Congo chief. Though uneducated, she was sensible and quite philanthropical, and was delighted in relating encounters and experiences during the ante-bellum days.

“It sho makes me feel sort o’ blue when I start a thinkin’ about dem days, ob long ago. Chile, youse neber had trouble; youse neber had to work wid a man rite nex to yer wid a stick as long as a yard, ready to slam you on de back if you dared to stop. But good Lawd bless dat dere Mr. President when he cleared us free niggers. Gee, chile, I’s sho glad, cause my master was sho hard on us. He called us ‘pore black trash.’ But I knowed dat he was wrong, and sure as youse born, dat Massa John got so down and out, dat it jist nachally killed him. I’s sorry; yes, de Lawd knows I’s sorry, cause Massa John couldn’t work—he wasn’t trained to it. One day Massa John sed he wus gwine beat the black hide ofen Fred’s back, cause Fred had neber picked no four hundred pounds of cotton dat day, but poor Fred wus sick, and he tole Massa John ’bout it, but Massa John kicked at he and sed: ‘I’ll git ye.’ Fred, he wanted to run off, but I clasped ma hands in prayer and beg Fred to stay right here, and keep his mouf shet; some day de good Lawd will deliber us. ‘Ebery

dog hab his day.' ”

“Aunt Lucindy, I have a favor to ask of you.”

“What am dat, Mis Nellie?” Her mouth opened with astonishment, he arms akimbo.

“I expect to send Lewis to school. He has expressed a desire to receive an education, and I expect to leave to-morrow morning for the Monastery, and in the event that he is accepted I shall consider it a special favor should you consent to come and live with me, as I would be alone.” Words failed her, her voice hushed and she broke down on the steps.

“Lawd, Lawd a'mercy, Mis Nellie, hush dat weepin'. De Lawd says: 'When youse knows youse rite, step on.' An dat's what I say. Dat boy is a wonder. He's gwine ter git dere some day, sho's dat dere chicken is got fethers on his back. Now, hush, Mis Nellie,” fondling her. “I know on my sole ob oner, I'se can't say no to you. I'se gwine cum rite here and take care ob you. Yas, I sho will. Now you take dat dere boy to schoolin' to de 'Monstry,' whateber dat is. Dis here boy ob mine will do de stirrin' round here. Nigger's got to work. Dey can't do nuthin else no-how.”

Aunt Lucindy was excited and pleased to such an extent that she danced for joy.

“Doing good is the only certain happy action in one's life. If there is a pleasure on earth which angels cannot enjoy, and which they might almost envy

man the possession of, it is the power of relieving distress. A large heart of charity is a noble thing. Good deeds double in the doing, and the larger half comes back to the donor."

In the meantime Lewis had approached his mother, placed his arms around her and said, affectionately: "Mother, don't cry; if it breaks your heart to see me leave, I would rather stay at home."

"Now, look here, little man, Mis Nellie's done stuck it into her head to let you go, and I says you'se gwine."

"Aunt Lucindy, will you take good care of my mother? Promise me you will?"

"Chile ob de Lawd, Aunt Lucindy's gwine keep her vision on dat dere mudder ob yourn, and what's gwine make her happy's gwine gib me joy. Now, youse all qit dat cryin'; it makes me feel weak at de hart."

The morning was a glorious one. Everything around the hut seemed to have taken on new life. The fowls had collected around the speakers on the steps, chattering in their own dialect, as if they meant to say: "We will miss you, your kindness, your care." In reality, everything around the hut would feel lonely without him. How he sympathized with everything! The flowers, how he admired them for their delicacy and fragrance; the birds, they thrilled him with delight; the trees, they furnished

him shade and coolness when he was fatigued and warm. All would feel neglected without his care and admiration.

All in readiness, the journey was begun. The party consisted of Lewis, his mother and Pete. The old barouche was dusted and cleaned thoroughly. Old Tom was hitched, a surprise to him, for he was seldom put into the harness for such travels. As they wheeled along the old country road, all his friends of the fields and woods seemed to bid him a fond farewell. He could see all of his favorite haunts. How often he had been there. How perfectly delightful it was. *Yes, he really grieved to leave them all.*

The Monastery, "Charité," worthy of its name, conducted by men who led a life under rules and vows and practiced the counsels of perfection, was located on a bluff overhanging a lake. With large tracts of woodland, the grounds around the edifice were superb beyond description. It was indeed a vast tract of exquisite landscape over which invigorating breezes ever played. A garden of flowers bloomed in profusion. The wide and long avenue of oaks presented a sight long to be remembered. A haven for the birds, a resort for the weary, an ideal institution for young men who wished to live a life of nobility, to secure an education that does not corrupt the mind, but a teaching which convinces that man

must die, and some day will have to answer for his actions.

"On the very tree, planted by my hand, there grows a thorn that pierces my very heart. Behold, how I bleed! It is a reminder of the weakness and humility of the heart, the beginning, the foundation of all virtue. Christians, of every state in life, will find in Him a pattern of all virtues. He bore all unworthy treatment, not merely with patience, but with an unspeakable meekness. He preferred to endure their malice without resistance, but with meekness."

As they were nearing their destination the bells of the cloister pealed out their ringing echoes. It incited Lewis with a longing desire to be there; each sound that was audible, each step that was made, each glimpse that he had, animated him and brought him nearer and nearer to the place that he knew absolutely nothing about.

His mother was silent, too. She was framing and repeating to herself the little talk that she was to make, "avec courage." They reached the heavy iron gates with big arches entwined with ivy, a symbol of fidelity. The words "Charité," *Deus Miserere Nobis* were sculptured in the arch above the gates.

Lewis' mother peered through the iron bars, and perceived a monk coming toward the gates. A peacock perched on a fountain was proudly strutting,

displaying its gay plumage, and, with its mournful cry, announced their coming.

“Good afternoon, my dear friends,” surprisedly uttered the monk. “Anything you wish?”

Lewis, embarrassed, stood speechless. The appearance of the grave monk shocked his every nerve. It was the first time that he had ever seen a monk in his religious garb.

His mother spoke pleasantly and pleadingly. “May I see the Abbot?”

“Indeed, lady,” and he unbolted the gates.

How beautiful and enchanting were the environments of this sacred place. The avenue, carpeted with pebbles so white that it made them feel as if they were walking on a snow-covered pathway; its borders of marguerites and daisies, fringed with phlox of every hue, were really very delightful to behold.

It was in the merry month of June, when Mother Nature is at her gayest. The lawns, so green and smooth, of such a vast expanse, presented a beautiful aspect to the eyes. Truly this was an inspiration to an artist.

How anxious he was to know how it all would terminate—whether he would be accepted or ordered out of this lovely place.

“Hope humbly, then with trembling pinions soar.”

They were ushered into the cloister and told to await the Abbot.

“O! Les heures de doute!”

Hope, when used with prudence, acts as a health tonic. Human life has not a surer friend. It is the miserable man's God, which in the hardest trial of calamity never fails to yield him beams of comfort. Also, remember it is the presumptuous man's devil which leads him a while in a smooth way, and then lets him break his neck on the sudden. But there is a source of consolation to all who rightly seek it.

The doors of the cloister opened noiselessly, and on the threshold stood a man far advanced in his fifties, tall and straight, his hair as white as the kerchief clasped in his hand, which he used habitually to brush his brow when he desired to think; with eyes of one who reads through your very soul, one who knows your failings and weaknesses as well as your good qualities. He bowed and spoke gently; his voice bespoke sympathy and eagerness to assist. “You seek me, I'm informed.” Advancing nearer, taking the hand of Lewis, he pressed it tightly.

“Yes, Abbot, I have come to you, not as a beggar or a charlatan, but as one who wishes to be directed—one who is lost, foresaken, destitute. Abbot, my son and I are not of your denomination, but, in the name of the One who directs our course in life, help us. I have no money, I'm penniless, but whatever I

possess otherwise, you may claim, should you see fit to do so. I have come to you with my son, my only child, beseeching your excellence to take him in your charge, that he may receive the proper training. I know not what your estimate of him will be, but I feel confident that he will prove himself worthy of your attention and consideration. He is at the age when all boys make plans and oftentimes are overpowered by their inclinations and fancies."

He smiled pleasingly, cleared his throat and spoke like she imagined a saint would speak. "Allow me to thank and congratulate you, kind lady, for your candor and humiltiy. It is not in my power to resist your honest cause and pleading. 'He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord.' It is not only to gratify our own feelings that we are to be charitable. God has given us the most precious commands on charity and alms-giving. He threatens with His wrath those who are avaricious and those whose hearts are hardened by their wealth, whilst, at the same time, He promises His most abundant blessings and the full happiness of Heaven to all who are willing to help the poor. In the name of God on high, I shall take unto my care your son, exercise the best of my understanding to make him follow the path of rectitude. With his good will I feel justified in saying that he will never regret being with us."

"Now Abbot, as I have stated before, I can offer

you no money, but I live on a little farm, and, whenever it is possible, I shall send produce to help pay the expenses that my son will be under. He will work, he is at your disposal."

"Persons seldom improve when they have no model to follow but themselves."

"Nay, nay, kind lady, you are not required to make sacrifice; all we want is your good will and confidence. If you are too poor to pay for the tuition of your son, worry not about it. Return to your abode, and be assured that we shall be devoted to him."

After the arrangements were completed and implicitly understood, he opened the door and allowed her to pass out. With his arms around Lewis, he petted him affectionately.

"When a strong brain is weighed with a true heart, it seems like balancing a bubble against a wedge of gold."

She bade her son a fond good-by. Lewis, in her embrace, wept bitterly, saying: "Mother, you will miss me? Come to me often."

"My dear son, be obedient to your superiors; heed the good counsel of the Abbot. Mother will be happy to know that you are doing your duty."

"Every good act and every good purpose will receive its own reward."

The Abbot was deeply touched by the fond part-

ing, and said encouragingly: "My kind lady, I am certain that your son will avail himself of his duties. I can see that he has been properly reared."

"What we learn in our youth
Grows up with us, and in time
Becomes a part of the mind itself."

The Abbot was termed a "grand savant." He was known to be prudent, a good administrator, charitable, progressive and priestly. He was recognized by all as a man of gentleness and piety in the labors of the church and humanity, and had other characteristics that shone forth from time to time, displaying the aggressive, practical and gainful mind. He found time, however, to read a great deal. It was said to be his favorite recreation, always expanding his mind with researches in classics and assimilating the beautiful principles of moral philosophy. He was ever ready and quick to appreciate merit, and manifested a lively regard for the welfare of his associates. One of his greatest sayings was: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His justice."

CHAPTER THIRD.

True worth is in being, not in seeming;
We get back our mete as we measure.
We cannot do wrong and feel right,
Nor can we give pain and gain pleasure,
For justice avenges each slight.
The air for the wing of the sparrow,
The bush for the robin and wren,
But always the path that is narrow
And straight, for the children of men.

Night had come. Lewis, in his appointed room, was in reverie before he retired for the night. His room was on the second floor, overlooking the lake. He was sitting by the window enjoying the scene that had caught his eyes. His thoughts simultaneously took wings and soared about his humble home.

The moon in its resplendent and fiery glow was invading the horizon and luminously ascending its

orbit, casting golden rays and reflections on the silvery waters below. His face seemed to be saddened by a passing thought when, hark! he heard a voice. His eyes scrutinized the waters of the lake, he lent his ear to the thrilling voice. There, in the reflection of the moon, he perceived a small boat floating along at its own disposal. The occupants were two, a man and a woman. She, in a contralto voice, was singing plaintively, accompanied by the violin played by the man. The masterpiece was so beautifully rendered, every word was perfectly audible. O! indeed, it touched his sensitive heart.

Who, when overwhelmed with solitude, will not feel consoled, enlivened, by the sweet flowing melody so gratifying in "The Rosary"?

The last phrase, "To kiss the Cross," resounded and lingered in his ears. It invoked him; the echo seemed to be supernatural. He reverently bowed his head in silence, trying to fathom the intentions, the purpose of this impulse, sinking, swelling in his heart. The inspiration had incited him with courage and perseverance.

Though he knew not what the Rosary was, what it was to recite the beads, "To kiss the Cross," still in the profoundness of his heart he could feel a craving to pray, as the voice continued, "To still a heart in absence wrung." Presently, the Prefect

knocked on the door, a warning that it was time to retire for the night.

He knelt beside his bed and thanked God for the blessings he had received, and begged Him to be merciful with his poor mother.

The morning dawned with all the splendors of a bright summer day. He was requested to assist at the early Mass in the chapel. Together with the boys he marched to the pew, looked about the church in amazement. Everything seemed so natural at times, and then a puzzled feeling would overpower him. Where was he? Was he to remain in entire ignorance of these strange happenings, or would they be explained? What was the meaning and purpose of these ceremonies?

After Mass, the Abbot ascended the pulpit and delivered an eloquent and forcible sermon. The text was: "God will render to every one according to his works."

"The thought and the desire of Heaven, still more than the sentiment of fear, my dear children, should direct our actions, help us to practice virtue and fulfill faithfully our duties. The Christian who has done his best in this life can confidently place his eternal future in the hands of God, whose goodness is a thousand times greater than our weakness."

After Mass Lewis was informed that the Abbot

desired to see him. He hurried to the cloister and found the Abbot waiting.

"Here I am, good Abbot."

"Come, now, let us sit here by the window, and I shall make known to you the rules of your new home and life. 'Ce n'est que le premier pas qui conte.' "

The rules were easily understood. Lewis was full of eagerness to obtain learning. He had a vehement longing to prove himself worthy of the esteem of all.

"A special request I shall make of you, my son," said the Abbot, "is always show your good will, honesty and courage in your work. The rest will come out all right.

"You must be courageous, even in the most ordinary habitual circumstances of your life. Courage is not only self-reliance, valor, audacity; it is also resignation and meekness under disappointments and sufferings; it is the effort made over self to accomplish a duty. You must also have patience.

"Your defects or sinful inclinations are the enemies you must fight; be full of zeal to conquer them. Try to show, at least, that good will which is a kind of courage; this virtue will neither be seen or admired by others, but God, Who leaves no effort unrewarded, will know how to reward you.

"Prayer will be one of your most important

duties. To pray, my dear child, is to converse with God; speaking to Him with your heart, and not with your lips. We are in continual want of God's help and of His gifts. He alone can preserve the life He gave us, and we should lose it as soon as He should cease to watch over us. You can pray without even addressing many words to God. A good thought is a prayer; a good action, well-performed duty, temptation withstood, are as so many prayers whose language God understands.

"Furthermore, my son, bind the Commandments and law of God in thy heart continually; when thou walkest, let them go with thee; when thou sleepest, let them keep thee, and when thou awakest talk with them. Because the Commandment is a lamp and the law a light, and reproofs of instruction are the way of life. Since you are not a Catholic I shall make it a special duty to answer all the questions you may feel disposed to ask about the Catholic faith. Do not hesitate to make inquiries of the instructors.

"You will have free access to the library."

"Dear Abbot" (Lewis spoke thoughtfully) "I wish to thank you from the depths of my heart for what you have said and done for me. I feel like one in a dilemma. I never had any one to be so tender and kind to me, save my poor mother." His head hung

for a second, and energetically he raised it again, speaking forcibly:

“I call God and the angels to witness me when I say that I shall try very hard to do as you bade me, and hear all further counsel that you see fit to give me.”

The Abbot clasped Lewis' hands in his, and recited the truthful words, which the boy never could forget, and which always served him as a guide through the travels of life:

“Count life a stage upon thy way,
And follow conscience, come what may;
Alike with Heaven and earth sincere,
With hand and brow and bosom clear.
Fear God—and know no other fear.”

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Wisdom and truth, the offsprings of the sky,
Are immortal, but cunning and deceptive.
The meteors of the earth, after glittering
For a moment, must pass away. . . .

(R. Hall.

"Abbot! Abbot! Come at once to Rollins' room. He is dying and calls for you," excitedly spoke Frank.

"I shall be there presently. Follow me, my son," said the Abbot to Lewis.

Lewis obeyed and they hurried to the dying man's room.

"O! while you live tell the truth and shame the devil."

They entered the room and found Rollins suffering the agonies of death. His eyes, dilated to their utmost dimensions, were glaring with death's sign in them. His hands clutched his throat, his mouth

opened in an effort to catch his breath; he was panting unmercifully.

As soon as he caught sight of the Abbot and Lewis his eyes turned fiery, and he spoke in tones of terror: "O! Abbot, forgive me, pray forgive me, for I have sinned shamefully. O! God, have mercy on my poor soul. Abbot, in the name of the God Who loves you, save me. He, in His almightiness, knows I am sorry—so much so, that I feel it would be serving me right if I should be sent to the infernal place in expiation of my sins."

"Peace be with you, my son. Come, now, lie here and be quiet; you are only feverish and demented for a time. Try to sleep. You need rest," said the Abbot.

"Yes, yes, O! God, I need rest—rest of mind, eternal rest for my poor corrupted soul, infected with vice. I have done abominable works, works of the devil." He raised his head, still clutching his throat.

He noticed Lewis there, looking on surprised and perplexed. He leaned forward and queried: "Who are you? What do you want? Who sent you here? Did you come here to deceive also, to play the part of a wolf in sheep's clothing? Abbot! Abbot! Send him away. I can see he is false. Look, he is trying to hide it. See him, the cur," screamed the death-stricken man, frantically.

Lewis, exhausted in breath at such an accusation, seemed to have taken root to the floor. The expostulations of this fearful man shook him from head to foot. "What does he mean, Abbot?"

The tongue of slander is never tired; in one form or another it manages to keep itself constantly occupied. It is ever ready and delighted to blight the hopes of the noble-minded, soil the reputation of the pure and destroy the character of the brave and strong.

Souls of high estate should readily understand that he who tries to down others is of a weak and evil nature, lacking refinement, shallow of mind.

The Abbot had a clue to this strange demeanor of the dying man. Elevating himself to his full height, he folded his arms and stared at him with a look of surprise and suspicion. And then a passing thought would change his countenance to sympathy and sorrow.

Was it true, really so, or only the hallucination of his fevered brain arising from the effect of his malady?

Rollins rolled in bed restlessly, and finally drew himself together in the center of the bed, as if he dreaded to be near any one.

The Abbot recalled several instances when Rollins had displayed the fault of deceit, but always made

amends. Now, the time had come when the devil had been beaten at his own game. This villain was hell-haunted.

“What is it you have to say? Come, out with it, you vile creature. I know you now. Tell me, who sent you here, and what for?”

“O! Abbot, I am dying; have compassion, I pray you. When I came to you with all the suavity of a saint, I was playing falsely. I was sent here by men who had offered me an enormous sum of money to learn all about the monastic life, in order to furnish them with information so that they might publish statements and be able to criticise you.

“You remember I came to you in the person of a poor, wayward beggar, with the hunger of a wolf. O! God, how it all comes back to me. Would that I had died at the gates rather than have been admitted into this sacred place, this home of virtue and Christianity, to commit this crime. O! if those rascals were only here, that I might curse them. Devils! Hell would be too good for them. O! Abbot. hold my hand while I die. I want to be near you when I breathe my last. Give me your chaplet—let me kiss the cross, that my Saviour may pity me. I am sorry, forgive me, God.”

“Recite your act of contrition, my son, and beg God to have mercy on your soul. He, in His divine

omnipotence, will soften the severity of your sentence. Also, implore Him to enlighten your accomplices, that they, too, might have contrition of heart for their grievous offenses.

“God, in His mercy, forgives us the sins of which we sincerely repent and confess.”

The Abbot released the dying man’s hand and bowed his head in prayer.

In an effort to stand up in bed, Rollins fell back. Just one more sigh, one more tear, and the hand of death had closed his eyes.

Lewis, almost frantic, fell on his knees beside the Abbot with a prayer on lips and a lesson in his heart.

The Abbot broke the terrible silence, saying softly and feelingly: “A good Christian and a good pious man sees nothing dreadful in death. It is the beginning of a life of happiness; it is the entrance into the Land of Promise, after a long journey. Now, my son, you have witnessed this dying man’s lament; you see the necessity of being prepared for the death that must come, if we hope to attain eternal happiness.

“Man knows that he cannot escape death, but he remains in entire ignorance of the moment at which it will overtake him. See, dear child, this man lived a lie—treachery. God hates lying, my child, because it

is the work of His enemy, the devil. The most hateful of all falsehood is calumny; that is to say, the false accusation of your fellow-man, your neighbor.

“Never have anything to hide; never do wrong. The Lord’s eyes are always upon you, even when no one on this earth sees you. No mortal being can deceive him; of what use would it be to you, then, to deceive your fellow-men?”

* * *

The Abbot related the following incident to Lewis:

“One cold and bleak winter evening a poor, ragged and famished man was found at the iron gates. He was shivernig. His limbs were numb. He spoke at intervals. I was deeply touched by the affliction of this sore and suffering man, and lent an attentive ear to his pleadings. He begged for a few moments’ shelter, a morsel of food, saying that he was forsaken, forgotten. Not a door was open to receive him. Relatives he had none. He had naturally fallen by the wayside.

“I readily took him to the infirmary, where he was cared for most patiently for several weeks, when he began to recuperate, and showed signs of health and vigor.

“The monks liked him because he seemed to be so devoted to them. He would smile whenever they happened to look at him.

“‘Beware of treacherous lips with perpetual smiles.’

“He told them that they had saved his life, and made of him a better man, and he, too, would devote his remaining days to serving God.

“No one ever suspected that this wolf in sheep’s clothing was but a spy, who was eager to support anything derogatory to the Church by publishing slanderous trash; such slander too much for any sane person. Honestly speaking, our Government is at fault for permitting obscene filth of that kind to pollute the mails. The pouches should at least be fumigated after being emptied.

“Remember, there is seldom anything uttered in malice which returns not to the heart of the speaker. He that indulges in such vices shows what we may expect from him.

“It is only envy, and envy is a poison. It is composed of odious ingredients in which are found meanness, vice and malice in about equal proportions. Like death, it loves a shining mark; like the worm, it never runs but to the fairest of fruits. To argue with one who is under the dominion of envy is useless. He is so blinded that he is always degrading or misrepresenting things which are excellent. He cannot see perfection; he is too incredulous to understand that he has sinned against God by

breaking his Commandment, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.'

"But, strange, indeed, when one of those defamers makes up his mind to study his weakness, not by reading false statements, but in spending years in researches, finding the truth, he admits that he is ignorant and his mind was poisoned.

"The room of the dead man was ransacked, but the works of the defamer could not be found, until one of the monks, while preparing the body for interment, discovered a wide band around the body of Rollins, which was worn next to the skin, directly under his arms, so as to make it convenient for the hand to be thrust in the inclosure. It was filled with letters and pamphlets against the Church and its teachings.

"Further investigation led to the discovery of the meeting place of Rollins and his instigators. Some of the monks remembered seeing Rollins out in the grounds and woods on several occasions at a late hour. They also had observed him standing under an old spreading oak, away from the Monastery.

"The tree was carefully examined, and, to their utmost surprise, they found the secret mail box in the large root that protruded from the earth. A hole had been bored which served as the mail box for the calumniators.

“The monks held a conference as to what should be done with the corpse of Rollins. Should we inter it, or notify those who had sent him there?

“How very sad and painful was the condition of this dead man. Have you ever thought of this? And yet, who ought to be more affected by this than us, who find it so easy to obey those orders which are given us kindly and tenderly? If it does not depend upon us, entirely, to change the sad condition of this poor soul, at least it lies in our power to render that condition less hard. In the eyes of humanity he is our equal; in God’s eyes, he is our brother. Consequently, we owe him justice, care and affection.

“This pious devotedness cannot long remain unknown; soon it will be talked about, and God will reward us for our noble conduct. Believe really that charity makes the giver happier than the one who receives their kindness; the joy compared to the bliss of Heaven.”

The funeral was performed with all the solemnity of the sacred rites of the Church. He was interred under the large oak at the same hour that he frequented it. A marble slab was placed against the root with the inscription:

“Let Not the Sting of Calumny Sink Too Deeply in Your Soul.”

Upon further deliberation the Abbot concluded

that it would be best to inform the compatriots of Rollins that he was dead and buried.

“My Dear Sirs—You will undoubtedly be surprised at the sad news I have to convey: the death of your staunch friend, Rollins. It took place yesterday morning. I was with him, and he was conscious to the last. May God have mercy on his soul. I merely write this to assure you of my sympathy.

“I remain, in Christ,

“ABBOT.”

We are all hastening onward to a tribunal at which a Judge presides, unto Whom all hearts are open, and by Whom the test of truth will be applied to every word and work of men. There will come a day when our everlasting condition, of happiness or misery, will be assigned to each of us. There will be no party strife, no arguing for victory; hence, why should we impute to each other malice and falsehood, and I know not what else? These things are wrong, and where wrong exists let it be pointed out and exposed. But when we consider the force of prejudice; the natural quick-sightedness of men for what tells in their favor, and their blindness to its opposite, charity will make us reluctant to impute the moral motives.

We all must stand before one Judge, must all be judged by one Law, and, on the last day, it will be

seen that every one engaged in defaming others will have acted the part of a fool, as well as a destroyer.

How shameful and despicable! Do you not consider it, particularly, as the sign of a very bad heart? It is only envy. How it leads to every dreadful consequence. Envy makes one egotistical, unjust, often wicked, and always unhappy. An envious person wishes to have everything to himself, so as to leave nothing to others.

It was jealousy and envy that caused the death of Abel. It was jealousy and envy which led the Pharisees to condemn our Saviour.

O! never let this evil passion take root in your heart.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

"Character is like stock in trade; the more of it a man possesses, the greater his facilities for making addition to it."

"Chere amie—there you are, as quiet as a mouse. Ha! ha! I'll bet I can guess what you are reading."

"The bet is made. You cannot tell me what this book is about."

"Well, don't you know that I have read it, too? Look on page 121 and you will see a little phrase that I have written."

"But you have not told me the title of the book."

"Well, it is 'The Life of Virgil.' "

"Good! You are a wizard,"

"Did you like it?"

"Yes, very much so. His poems gained him fame and friends. At one time some lines from them were recited on the stage, when Virgil happened to be in the theatre, and the whole audience rose to do him honor.

"To his epic poem, 'The Æneid,' he gave the last eleven years of his life; he purposed devoting three years more to polishing and elaborating the poem, but he died without having given it his final touches. It is said he wished, in his last illness, to burn it, but his friends forbade, and it was preserved and published without alteration."

"I simply love to study human nature. I find pleasure in it," spoke Lewis.

"I don't care so much to know about other people. What is the use of worrying about the others?" answered John.

"Well, there's where we differ," said Lewis. "Look, yonder goes the Abbot for his walk. Let's catch up with him; he'll be glad to have us join him."

The conversationalists were students of the Monastery. John Russell was nearing his graduation, while Lewis Ferry was a novice.

John was delighted with the companionship of Lewis, who looked upon John as his chum. They talked together, read together, and in that way their acquaintance ripened into mutual friendship.

So strong was their affection that the one was sad and lonely when the other was not present.

This particular evening Lewis had found solace on a rustic bench in a far corner of the grounds,

reading. John was taking his finals, but as soon as he extricated himself from his task he sought his friend.

"Please, kind Abbot, may we walk with you?" The Abbot was in deep thought, and almost jumped when Lewis addressed him. He responded hurriedly:

"With much delight, my dear boys. Lewis on my right and John on my left," laughingly added the Abbot, with his arms around them in a fatherly way. Thus they walked on and on, discussing life and its trials.

"Yes, Abbot, just one more month, and I shall be gone. Gone into the world. Oh! how happy! What will become of me? What will be my purpose, my anxieties, in this outer world? Will I be able to resist temptations that will stare me in the face?" laughingly uttered John.

"John, you are fully prepared to enter this gay world, if you will only remember what I have tried to instill in you. Again, I shall illustrate and prove who is your best friend in this wonderful 'beau monde.' There is no other thing of more worth to thee than it. It is Conscience—that which enables us to discern good from evil, the natural law of God; the voice which speaks from the depths of our souls. You must follow its dictates; you can hear it only by showing good will and sincerity towards yourself.

A good conscience makes one happy and contented. It doubles our pleasures, and consoles us even in disappointment. It alleviates our sufferings. Let these words of holy Scripture sink deeply into your heart: 'In every action, listen to the voice of thy conscience; thou wilt never meet with a more faithful adviser!' "

"Abbot, true it is. I'll make it a point to always heed my conscience, but, now, what will constitute my happiness? I do not know what my lot is. What will bring me happiness?" inquired John.

"Well, what is it that you will seek in this world to bring you happiness?" asked the Abbot.

"I shall first seek honor and respect," answered John.

"And then!" said the Abbot?

"Then I expect to accumulate a fortune."

"And then?"

"Well, then I expect to select a wife, and be happy with my family."

"And then?" anxiously asked the Abbot.

John peered at the Abbot innocently, and failed to reply.

"And then remember that man is mortal," added the Abbot, embracing John fondly, "and some day he will be called to account for his actions. Listen to me, John: The object which men have in view in their pursuits is happiness. Very often they falsely

imagine that their happiness consists in the very things which can only make them restless and unhappy. Thus it is in the possession and enjoyment of wealth that some seek their happiness; others seek it in the gaining of world honors; and others, again, in the enjoyment of false pleasures. But do they succeed in gaining the object of their pursuit? Are they contented and satisfied, so as to want nothing more to make them happy? Is any one happy in the possession and enjoyment of earthly things?"

"Now, why is this?" doubtfully questioned John.

The Abbot answered:

"It is because created things can never satisfy the desire of the soul; they can never supply its wants, therefore, they can never make you happy. Experience will teach you that, when you wander from God for the sake of enjoying the riches, or honors, or pleasures of this life, you wander, at the same time, from peace and happiness. You wander, therefore, from the very things you seek; you labor under a fatal delusion, deceiving your own self.

"The only true happiness is in the God that made you. It is only in seeking and obtaining Him, by loving and serving Him, that you can find the peace and happiness you seek. It is only in this that your wants and all the desires of your heart can be satisfied.

"Now, John, as I have stated, heed your con-

science, and you will find life not so burdensome as some have found it. There will come to you certain trials when you will be at a loss as how to get rid of your troubles, but, again, heed conscience. And, remember, the longer you wait to make retribution the more your difficulties will increase. If you marry, know your wife, share her burdens, be a true help-mate."

"'It is a strong argument for a state of retribution hereafter, that in this world virtuous persons are very often unfortunate, and vicious persons prosperous!'

"This life is only a state of trials, a few days granted us for the purpose of preparing ourselves to be admitted into the joys of Heaven. Take care, my son, let not the whirl of social intercourse master you. If you fall in love with a virtuous and sensible woman, marry—but remember, no hastiness; know thyself and trust in God.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

“ ‘The love we should bear to a parent is not to be measured by years, nor annihilated by distance, nor forgotten when they sleep in dust.’ ”

“O! Mis Nellie, here am a letter from Lewis. I know it is,” screamed Pete, handing the letter to Lewis’ mother. “Dar it is, Mis Nellie. I jes loped dat mule for all it’s worth, ’cause I knowed you wus lookin’ for one letter.”

She tore open the letter nervously, sitting on the steps so as to read aloud to Aunt Lucindy, who was standing with her arms akimbo, and Pete was looking on anxiously and attentively.

“My Dear Mother—Please be kind enough to pardon my negligence in answering your most appreciated letter. It meant so much to me. Thank you most heartily for the little souvenir. It occupies the place of honor on my reading table.

“I am very busy nowadays. Have scarcely a minute to myself. The examinations are about over for

a while, but I want to go straight to work again, with more energy and perseverance.

“Dear mother, I wish to thank you a thousand times for the sacrifice you have made in sending me to this worthy place. I can never tell you how much it has meant to me. Whatever I may be able to do for you, will never repay the debt of gratitude I owe you.

“I know you miss me, mother, and I can voice the same feeling, for I miss you more than you can imagine. But let us hope for the best.

“Last evening I felt so lonely. I was sad because my good friend, John, has gone away. He was so anxious to get home. I am sure that I shall be happy here, although the home-sick feeling gets the best of me once in a while.

“How is dear Aunt Lucindy? She is such a good old soul. I often think of her. (“Bless his heart,” put in Aunt Lucindy. “Mis Nellie, read dem lines agin,” and the tears streamed down her cheeks.) And that good friend of mine, Pete? Tell him I often picture the good times we have had together. (Pete, almost heart-broken at this, shook his head.)

“Mother, I again thank you, and rest assured that you have the first thought in my prayers. I know you will say that the best thanks I can offer is to make

the most of my opportuniities, and I shall strive hard not to disappoint you.

“Your loving son,

“LEWIS.”

She folded the letter and stood up looking at the woods and fields before her. Her thoughts did not come or go in the order of sequence. Her mind was active rather with a series of emotions and flashes of feeling. Now and then a hint of some incident that occurred there some months ago. How it all came back to her!

Her good son, she missed him in many ways. Not without a tinge of sorrow did she realize that he was gone. Probably it would be years before she would have him back. She knew that whenever she should express the desire for him to come home he would not hesitate. Though it was killing her to have him away, she would never, never let him know.

The delightful and invigorating freshness that blew across the fields this morning and lingered with its delicious odors and cool breath, eased her burning heart to some extent, but suddenly it would swell again with pangs of sorrow and pain. It almost choked her. She walked into the house and called Aunt Lucindy to assist her to bed. She was feverish and weak.

“Mis Nellie, what am de matter wid you? You’s e

pale as a ghost, and tremblin' like a leaf. Please, mam, tell me what is ailin' you?"

"Nothing, Aunt Lucindy; I only feel tired and feverish."

Aunt Lucindy could not be put off that way. She had a heart, and could feel for others, though it had been trampled on and abused so often that it was about immune to sufferings. She returned to her work, but something prompted her to watch her mistress closely. After a short while she entered the sick room again and found her mistress dying. Her hands were clasped in prayer. Her eyes were rolling in agony. Aunt Lucindy screamed for Pete, and lamented herself unrestrainedly. How pitiful and touching it was to see this good and devoted colored mammy sobbing and shivering with grief over the dying condition of her beloved mistress.

"Lawd, Lawd ob Glory, have pity on my mistress. Save her, O! Lawd! Mercy heben! Peace be to her!"

With the assistance of Pete, she tried to lift her so as to give her water, but her lips were cold, her teeth were locked—she was dead.

Aunt Lucindy, exhausted, in tears and sobs, was at a loss to know what to do. Where could she go for help?

The people in the neighborhood detested them.

They would turn her down if she appealed for assistance. Finally she decided to send for old Dr. Felix, thinking probably he would come to her succor. She would implore him—tell him how it all happened—and then he might advise her what to do.

How was she to break the sad news to Lewis? O! no, she could not. Only the thought of it made her heart break.

The doctor arrived with Pete, and examined her dead mistress. He said death was due to heart failure and complications. He advised Aunt Lucindy to let Lewis know of it at once.

But how could she? It was too far for Pete to go alone, and she had no money to hire any one to go to the Monastery.

“Leave it to me, then,” said the doctor. “I’ll inform the boy of the death of his mother.” He immediately sent a message to the Abbot, requesting him to convey the sad news to Lewis, and asking both of them to come at once.

How uncertain is human life! There is but a breath of air, and the beat of a heart between this world and the next. When death enters a home we do not philosophize; we only feel. The eyes that are full of tears do not see, though in course of time they do see more clearly than those that have never known sorrow.

“What does he know,” said a sage, “who has not suffered?” Death quickens recollection painfully. Memory recalls a thousand sayings to regret. The grave cannot hide the face of the one who sleeps. The coffin and the green mound are cruel. They force us to remember. A man never sees so far into human life as when he looks over a wife or mother’s grave. His eyes get clear then; and he sees, as never before, what it is to love and be loved, what it is to injure the feelings of the beloved.

The human heart is prone to give way to grief and lamentations. But wait; soon, when like the tired pilgrim thou shalt fall sick and weary, He will take you home to rejoice in finding friends from whom you have been separated; then how true the saying: “It was all for the best.”

Experience is often bitter, but wholesome; only by its teachings can we learn to suffer and be strong.

It may be affirmed that good men reap more real benefit from their afflictions than bad men do from their prosperities; for what they lose in wealth, pleasure or honor, they gain in wisdom and tranquillity of mind.

“No creature would be more unhappy,” said the sage, “than a man who had never known affliction.”

It is better to suffer than to injure. Endeavor to extract a blessing from it. Christianity itself is a re-

ligion of sorrow. It was born in sorrow, in sorrow it was tried, and by sorrow it was made perfect.

Lewis and the Abbot were seated under the tall elm at the stile. They had just returned from the grave where Lewis' mother had been laid to rest. Lewis was striving to understand the meaning of these sad trials, while the Abbot consoled him, encouraged him in his soft voice and helpful sayings:

"Yes, my son, remember what you have seen and what I say to you. Some day it will bring you happiness, a reward for your efforts and fortitude."

Those who have suffered much are like those who know many languages—they have learned to understand and to be understood by all.

In sorrow we love and trust our friends more tenderly and the dead become dearer to us.

The theologian says: "Every Calvary has an Olivet."

"All mankind must taste the cup which destiny has mixed, be it bitter or be it sweet."

"The great author says, 'Sorrows gather around great souls as storms do around great mountains but, like them, they break the storms and purify the air,' recited the Abbot.

"Now, my son, dry your tears, for your mother is in heaven. I know the loss of so tender and loving a mother is felt. O! a mother's love, a mother's grave!

It is indeed a sacred spot. It may be unnoticed by the stranger, but to our hearts how dear! Who has stood by the grave of a mother and not remembered her pleasant smiles, kind words, gentle influence and earnest prayers for us?

“Alas! how little do we appreciate a mother’s tenderness while she is near us on this earth. But when she is dead and gone from us, when the cares and coldness of the world come withering to our hearts, when we experience how hard it is to find true sympathy, how few love us for ourselves, how few befriend us in misfortune, then it is that we think of the mother we have lost.

“Rest assured, my son, that you have been a deserving and exemplary boy, the pride and life of your mother.”

Lewis only bowed his head in sadness. Words failed him. His heart was full and he could not speak. In sadness he repeated, “My only love is dead.”

“Now, it is only right that that we should recompense the good and faithful servant of your mother for her kindness and loving care. I would suggest that you bequeath her all the household effects, and some of the stock and poultry. The balance we shall take to the Monastery.’

“Dear Abbot, I am at your command, and what-

ever your conscience shall see fit to do, will be gratefully appreciated." They returned to the hut in a somewhat settled attitude, Lewis too broken-hearted to speak. The Abbot, all pensive, fondled him in a fatherly embrace.

"Aunt Lucindy, you may claim all the contents of this house, as well as some of the pigs and chickens, for your attention and service to your mistress."

"De Lawd be wid you, kind sir," and she wept bitterly. "Now, I'se not gwine take dese here things 'cause it's gwine ter pay me fer takin' care of Mis Nellie. No, no, Mis Nellie's neber asked me fer nuthin', when she done sumthin' fer me. But, if youse say its mine, I'se gwine 'cept em. Yes, I'se gwine keep dem fer a 'membrance fro mmy dear Mis Nellie."

Clasping the hands of Lewis, she cried pathetically. "My dear little man, don't forgit Aunt Lucindy, but 'member me as your poor colored mammy. She's gwine miss you. De good Lawd hears me when I say she's gwine miss you and she's gwine be lonesome widout you all. Down dere in my little cabin, I'se gwine grieve. Yes, Lawd, my friends they's all gwine, gwine to a better place—good Lawd!"

This honest and faithful servant was so grateful and so attached to her mistress that her death was a tragic affair. How she would miss her, no one

could imagine. In the death of her, she had lost her only friend.

Old friends! What a multitude of deep and varied emotions are called up from the soul by the utterance of these words:

“A true friend is such a rare thing to have that you are blessed beyond the majority of men if you possess but one such. Be very slow to give up an old and tried friend. Cling to your friends after choosing them with proper caution, also beware of false friends. Flies leave the kitchen when the dishes are empty. Ravens settled down for a banquet and are suddenly scared away by a noise; likewise, how quickly at the first sound of calamity the superficial friends are up and away.”

While Aunt Lucindy was removing the old and worn carpet from the floor, the Abbot observed a rather strange figure so perfectly cut and laid in the dusty floor that it was almost impossible for the eye to detect it, but for the dust that had collected in the crevices. Upon investigation it was found to be a trap door to a cave under the hut.

The Abbot descended the steps into the cave and further search led to the discovery of an iron chest filled with gold, silver and jewelry. The surprise was almost incomprehensible to the Abbot, but Lewis, who knew the traditions connected with the

hut, readily understood the mystery. After enlightening the Abbot, they proceeded to ransack the cave.

Awe-stricken, the Abbot almost screamed when he found, partly buried in the sand, his golden crucifix, studded with precious stones, a valued gift from His Holiness, the Pope of Rome. It had been taken from his room, and no one had ever been able to learn of its whereabouts.

Oh! how it filled his heart with joy, now that he had recovered it, and particularly so because he knew now how it had been carried away feloniously. Then he recalled the night when burglars had entered the Monastery and stolen the crucifix, together with other articles.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

“When one sets himself to live a grand life, man cannot interrupt him—God will not.”

(Brown.

“Ce n’est que le premier pas qui conte.”

“Abbot, I am in receipt of a letter from John. It is somewhat encouraging and enticing but then I feel a reluctance to abide by his wishes; still” (his voice grew faint), “I feel at times like I would care to visit him and convince myself, see if I shall be pleased and willing to lead a life as he suggests.

“Dear Abbot, you know me better than I know myself, tell me what I must do. You may read this letter.”

“My Dear Lewis:—

“You will doubtless have noticed in the newspapers, which I sent you, that the great American comedian, ——, is to visit New Orleans next month, and give a round of his inimitable performances. I know you have never seen this distinguished actor,

and I am certain that you would consider it a treat to admire one of his world-renowned characters. I should esteem it a favor if you would consent to come and spend a part of your vacation with me, so that we can witness one of his wonderful presentations.

"I had a long conversation with Ludolph last week, and was delighted to hear of your good fortune. Who could have surmised that the poor little villager would some day become wealthy? Well, well, now I shall have to address you as—what? Instruct me on this matter, for I am anxious to present you to my aristocratic and particular friends.

"O! how glad I was to learn that you are an excellent, rather eminent musician. Dear boy, I assure you that nothing will hinder you from making an impression on our society here; as we express it, a 'hit.'

"I can never tell you how happy I am, how pleasant life is here. It is indescribable. You will have to be with us to enjoy it.

"I was told that you are religiously inclined, that you have been converted to the Catholic faith, but I sincerely trust it is not an incentive to becoming a religious, be sequestered from secular concerns. You are too young to be secluded in such a fashion. Undoubtedly, the Abbot is gradually leading you to

it. But, so much as you need his good counsel, do not decide upon any walk in life until you have convinced yourself that you find no real happiness in the outer world.

“Lewis, my friend, I am indeed anxious to see you. I have so much to tell you. I never thought that I would be so delightfully taken up in society. I was so ignorant of the pleasures and real life of this ‘beau monde.’

“Dear friend, society is the balm of life. To be entirely secluded from all human intercourse is wretchedness. Many young men fail for years to get hold of the idea that they are subject to social duties. The spirit of life is society.

“Now, dear Lewis, I sincerely hope you will fail to find an excuse to decline my invitation.

“How is the Abbot? Remember me to him. Tell him I am still able to obey my conscience. Anxiously awaiting your favorable response, I am, devotedly,

JOHN.”

“Real life of this ‘beau monde,’ uttered the Abbot, with a look of repugnance on his face, as he composedly folded the letter and handed it to Lewis, with a smile that bespoke sympathy and regret.

“It is to be noticed with what apparent ease of manner some men enter society, and how others remain away always.

"Lewis, I understand that you are desirous to be in society," said the Abbot.

"I shall add that it is right for you to go. Enter the social life. You have money and nothing will mar your expectations, if you can resist its snares and make the modest use of it.

"But, remember, men who affect your healthy mind with too much pleasure or sympathy will prove themselves very frequently your worst friends instead of your wisest counselors. It is good to meet in friendly intercourse and enjoy that social cheer which so vivifies the weary and despairing heart, but restraints of many kinds are necessary in order to avoid the vulgarity that too often befalls society. Society is the only field where the sexes meet on terms of equality, the arena where character is found and studied, but remember the essential phase of social life is the company you keep. Hence companionship with the wise never fails to have a most valuable influence on the formation of your character.

"As the poet says:

" 'The mind is a great deal more likely to infection than the body. The society of virtuous persons is enjoyed beyond their company, and vice carries a sting even into solitude.'

"It is not alone the low and dissipated, the vulgar

and profane, from whose society you are in danger, but there are persons of apparently decent morals, of polished manners and interesting talents, who, at the same time, are unprincipled and wicked. These are the persons whose society and influence are most to be feared. Their very breath is poisonous, their embrace death.

“From impure air we take diseases; from bad company, vice and imperfections.

“‘Let no man deceive himself by thinking that the contagions of the soul are less than those of the body.’

“‘Tell us whom you prefer as companion, and we can tell you who you are like.’ My son, hold on your way, and seek to be the companion of those who fear God. So shall you be wise for yourself and never have occasion to repent for inconsiderate actions.”

THE FOLLOWING WEEK—LEWIS READY TO DEPART.

“Right you are, my son. Seek your goal,” handing Lewis a little booklet, saying: “Let this little reminder ever be with you in your hours of meditation.”

Lewis accepted it with much thankfulness, and read it thoughtfully.

“When a good man is abroad the world knows and feels it. Beneath his smile lurks no degrading

passion; within his heart there slumbers no guile. He is not exalted in mortal pride; not elevated in his own views; but he is moral and virtuous before the world. He stands enthroned on truth; his fortress is wisdom and his dominion is the vast and limitless universe. Always upright, kind and sympathizing; always attached to just principles; these constitute his only true manliness."

"I thank you, dear Abbot. My endeavors will be to live according to just principles:" Clasp ing the Abbot's hands he continued: "My one true friend, words are inadequate to express my gratitude, my many thanks to you, for all you have done for me, and I sincerely hope that some day I may be able to return your kindness. Promise me, dear Abbot, that I shall have a place in your prayers. It pains me more than you can imagine to leave you," pausing, with tears streaming down his cheeks. "You, who have taken me in beggary, a poor, ignorant creature, and release me in wisdom, and, with the correct views of life, a good and pious Christian. I shall be careful to try to avoid errors, and my great desire will be to gather only the true jewels of life. With God and a wish to do right in human life, it naturally becomes a noble and beautiful thing."

"Yes, my dear boy, every youth should form, at the outset of his career, the solemn purpose to make

the most and best of the powers which God has given him. And always remember that my ardent wish is to see you happy and traveling the road of a true gentleman."

"My dear Abbot, you may rest assured that time shall never efface the impressions you have engraven in my memory."

With quivering lips he proceeded: "You have relieved my cares, raised my hopes, and abated my fears. Your friendship has improved my happiness and doubled my joys, divided my griefs.

"You have faithfully reproved me at my face for actions which others were ridiculing and censuring behind my back. You have wept with me in my hours of distress." He stopped, lowered his head; and the Abbot embraced him, saying:

"Friendship, dear boy, which is born in adversity is more firm and lasting than that formed in happiness."

Lewis Ferry was no longer called the little villager. He was now a model man. The years spent at the Monastery had essentially benefited him. He possessed those inexplicable ways, so magnetic and persuading, that influence which constantly and imperceptibly escaped from his daily life. He exerted this power over others by his thoughts, words and actions.

Tall and stately, he carried himself with ease. His chestnut hair, and azure blue eyes, large and dreamy, with a gaze that tames and bespeaks friendship, made him a handsome and attractive personage. He was a man who thought, read, studied and meditated; had intelligence cut in his features, stamped on his brow and gleaming in his eyes. He knew that man should be rated, not by his hoards of gold, but by his unexceptional principles, relative both to character and religion. To strike out these, what would he be? A savage without sympathy! But let man go abroad with just principles, and what is he? An exhaustless fountain in a vast desert!

He was sorry to leave his old and tried friends, the monks, they who looked upon him as their brother.

The Abbot broke the silence, saying: "Dry your tears, my son. You will soon make new friends in this great world, and I trust you know the value of them, and again, remember the great saying: 'They are never alone who are accompanied with noble thoughts.'"

"Dear Abbot, I know nothing of the outer world. I am well informed in some things, but the realities of life I have never known. Therefore, do you not think it possible for me to go out into the world and study life as it is lived? With all my wealth, I shall

be able to search its secret chambers. O! yes, I shall make a deep study of life."

"My son, you speak broad-mindedly. I say to you, go, study life, with its thousand voices calling you. It is a great mission. It may be a crowning triumph, or a disastrous defeat, garlands or chains, a prison or a prize. Life is a thing above professions, callings and creeds.

"My dear son, bear in mind the volume lies unopened before you. Its covers are illuminated by the pictures of fancy, and its edges are gleaming with the golden tints of hope. Vainly you may strive to loosen its wondrous clasp. O! 'tis a task which none but the hand of time can accomplish. Always consider that:

"Life was lent for noble deeds."

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

My God and Father, while I stray
Far from my home on Life's rough way,
Oh! teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done!

His eyes were blurred by the unrestrained tears as he sat in silence on the fast-moving train, bound for the great metropolis, NEW ORLEANS.

He livened up as it was announced that his destination was near, peered through the window into the darkness, and, in great awe, shivered from head to foot, as he espied the numerous spectacles of the city beautiful that he was entering. The bright and radiant lights from the skyscrapers were surprisingly grand. Those pulsing and changeable lights were like a great horde of fire-flies in one grand revelry. The strange noises made him wild. The train stopped, he hurried out and walked unconsciously into John's arms. His eyes opened in awe and astonishment.

"How are you, my dear boy? Well, I feared you would get lost in this city. Ha, ha, ha!" joyously spoke John.

"It is a wonderful change," said Lewis.

"Come along, we will soon be home, so that you can rest. I know the journey was rather tiresome, wasn't it?"

"Very much, John."

John's home was a mansion in every sense of the word, and he occupied it alone with his private servants and attendants. His mother died a short time after he received his M. D. degree and left him immense wealth.

Lewis was ushered into the spacious hallway, where he was relieved of his personal effects by a specially appointed valet, who showed him to his gorgeous chamber.

"My, but I am being treated like a prince," thought he. He looked about the room in joy; presently a moment's reflection, a passing thought: "The beginning of my new life," murmured he.

"Lewis, old pal, I'm so glad to have you with me," excitedly spoke John, walking into the room and tapping Lewis on the shoulder. "Old chum, I want you to be at home here. I want you to feel that you are at liberty to do as you wish; understand?"

"You will soon be on to the ways of this great

city. We shall enjoy life at its highest degree—that is, be ever ready to entertain and be entertained. Ha, ha!” laughed John.

“But, John, I know nothing about society and its formalities.”

“Yes, decidedly so. The etiquette of the drawing-room differs from that of the Monastery. What may be downright rudeness in the cloister may be gentility in the drawing-room,” answered John.

“You must have agreeable manners,” continued John as they seated themselves by the open window viewing the avenue, brilliantly illuminated; “also fascinating powers. Your success will greatly depend upon your address, manners. Manners have a great deal to do with the estimation in which men are held by the world.”

“Yes, John, I know that nothing will develop a spirit of true politeness except a mind imbued with goodness, justness and generosity. You know the saying: ‘Manners are different in every country, but true politeness is everywhere the same.’ ”

“Very well said,” replied John. “I feel sure you will not be at a loss to make your life agreeable and chivalrous.

“Now we shall dine, and then I expect a couple of friends who will accompany us to the club rooms of the Elks. There you will meet a number of fine gen-

tlemen, who will endeavor to make you feel very much at home and at ease. They will doubtless prove to be the class that you like, Lewis. For instance, Mr. Klotz; he is quite scholarly, and takes delight in discussing topics of grave importance, always trying to broaden his intellect. He is a great lexicographer."

The club was veritably a source of pleasure and beneficial recreation for its members, a social and benevolent organization, giving scope and purpose to their aims as true gentlemen.

Lewis was gradually taken into the confidence of Mr. Klotz, and conversation finally drifted into discussions of various natures, until benevolence was broached and pleasurably argued, although they both took the affirmative, each giving his views on doing good in this world of trials and hardships.

"Yes," said Mr. Klotz, "the enjoyment of benevolent acts grows upon reflection, and if there be a pleasure on earth which angels cannot enjoy, and which they might almost envy man the possession of, it is the power of relieving distress."

"I think, Mr. Klotz," said Lewis, "that we cannot conceive of a picture of more unutterable wretchedness than is furnished by one who knows that he is wholly useless in the world."

"And in a moral sense," interestingly added Mr.

Klotz, "we know that 'it is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

"Yes," joined in Lewis, " 'selfishness is the root of evil.' 'Benevolence is its cure.' "

"That is a truthful proverb, my son. He that will not permit his wealth to do any good to others, while he is living, prevents it from doing any good to himself when he has gone. To pass a whole lifetime without performing a single generous act, till the dying hour, is to live like the talipot palm tree of the East, which blossoms not till the last year of its life. It then bursts into a mass of flowers, but emits such an odor that the tree is cut down to be rid of it. Such is the life of those who postpone their beneficence until the close of their days. They then surrender everything when they see they cannot continue to keep possession, and are liberal when they can no longer be parsimonious."

"Lewis, my friend, I regret to take you away from your well-favored company, but it is necessary that we return home, as I have an urgent call to the suburbs," interrupted John.

"Well, Mr. Klotz, I do hate to leave good company, but I trust I shall have the honor of seeing you again," courteously spoke Lewis.

"Thank you, Mr. Ferry, the pleasure of your com-

pany was elevating as well as enjoyable, and I would consider it a treat to converse with you again. Au revoir, my dear sirs."

CHAPTER NINTH.

“He made his final sally forth upon the world, hoping all things, believing all things, little anticipating the chequered ills in store for him.”

(Irving.

Five months have elapsed and Lewis is realizing the remarkable change in his life. He earnestly favors the change; everything is so pleasant—the golf links, afternoon teas, clubs, theatre parties and the dinners dansante. He is completely taken up in the whirl of society.

His thoughts take wings as he swings, comfortably propped up with pillows, in the hammock on the veranda under the sweet-scented wistaria that artistically clambered and adorned the spacious and cool veranda. “How unfortunate is he who has never known the blessings of society.” He drew from his pocket the little booklet from the Abbot, and there, in silent study, read it pensively. He looked back on the past. Oh! how touchingly sad was his past

life. It seemed like a dream, a mere vision. He is happy now. This new life is more enjoyable than he had anticipated. He has written to the Abbot telling him that the true sphere of human virtue is found in society; it is the school of human faith and trials; and that he is still heeding his forewarning, that restraints of many kinds will be necessary. His mind has acquired new ideas, and, by frequent exercise of its powers, the understanding gains fresh vigor. This social cheer really vivifies the weary and desponding heart.

John, unnoticed, approached stealthily, took the booklet from Lewis, saying: "What have you there, dear sir? Oh! some sermon of that Abbot. Oh! forget it. Let's be jolly good fellows. Come with me; I'm on a hurried call, and coming back we shall tarry at Miss Miller's. You charming fellow, she has inquired about you. I am led to believe that she entertains the utmost feelings for you, old chum."

"Oh! shoot, John; tell that to yourself; the girl would not have me for her chauffeur."

"Ha, ha, ha! Believe me, she is some girl," laughingly uttered John, punching Lewis in the side. "As pretty as a rose kissed by the morning's dew."

"Oh! hush; you're an ass."

The call was paid, and on their way to Miss Miller's John informed Lewis that he had decided to

marry Edna. "The wedding will be announced real soon," joyously spoke John.

"What, John! You contemplating matrimony? What has gotten hold of you?"

"Nothing, but I have met my ideal, and wish to make her my wife."

"Your wife, John? Are you positive it will be a marriage of true sentiment and affection? Why, you hardly know the girl. You met her just two months ago."

"I have made all the reflections necessary. My heart burns for her. I can resist no longer, consequently I must marry her or die."

"John, my dear friend, you are too inconsiderate; this is too hasty. Remember, 'married in haste is married in waste.' You have been acquainted with this girl for scarcely two months, and I can vouch that you do not know her."

"Lewis, there is nothing more lovely, more full of the divinest courage, than married life. There is nothing which so settles the turbulence of a man's nature as his union in life with a high-minded woman. And Edna is just the kind to bring me contentment and happiness, rest of brain and peace of spirit."

"John, you are either infatuated or deeply in love, but I dare mention again the former, 'infatuated.'"

Of all institutions that affect human weal or woe on earth, none is more important than marriage. It is the foundation of the great social fabric, and it conceals within its mystic relations the secrets of the largest proportion of happiness and misery connected with the lot of man."

"No use arguing, Lewis; I am ready, and expect to enter into a league of perpetual happiness."

"John, old chum, search your memory and recall the sayings of the Abbot. 'Marriage, to be a blessing, must be properly entered. It has fundamental laws which must be obeyed. It is a simple necessity laid in man's social nature, which may be read and understood of all men who will investigate that nature.' Then, John, marriage should be made a study. It should not be entered into blindly, but rather in the daylight of a perfect knowledge of its rules and regulations, so that no uncertainty shall attend its realization, no unhappy revelation shall follow a knowledge of its reality. Shall you enter into its relations without a knowledge of these duties? John, I wish you every success in life, but I'm inclined to believe that you are too hasty in the selection of your bride. Don't be impulsive. Again, I say, don't enter marriage in hot haste or blind stupidity."

"Fiddlesticks, Lewis, you are a pessimist. You are too old-timey in your conceptions of life, especially

married life. You will never be truly happy, my boy. Married life is the only life for me."

"Now you see how thoughtful and deep you are. I never said that married life was a disgrace. I say again that it is the grand social institution of humanity, but its laws and regulations are of momentous importance to the race."

"If I didn't know Edna I would readily give up the idea of making her my wife, but I feel justified in saying that I am thoroughly acquainted with her attributes and character. She is like all women—loves man, the strong, the resolute and vigorous man. To these qualities she looks for protection."

"Yes, and remember that you want them blended with tender and lofty sentiments," added Lewis.

"Listen, Lewis: Some are disappointed in marriage, because they expect too much of it."

"Listen, John: Many, also, are disappointed because they fail to bring into the copartnership their fair share of forbearance and common sense and, when real life comes with its troubles and cares, there is a sudden awakening as from a dream. But understand me, marriage entered into understandingly, and lived as becomes thoughtful, considerate human beings, becomes a delightful source of domestic happiness."

"Then, exactly so, shall Edna, my all, and I live.

Our married life will indeed be the source of happiness.

"Love at sight is truly the best," seriously spoke John.

"Now, here we are at Miss Miller's," said John "and, of course, you may continue the discussion of marriage laws, should you care to. Ha, ha, ha! And let matrimony be the sequel."

"Laugh; 'Who laughs last, laughs best,' but, ahem!" emphasized Lewis, "I am not so easily and unconsciously trapped."

As they entered the garden of the suburban home of Miss Miller, Lewis was amazed at the beauty and grandeur of this palatial abode. His whole soul was enraptured. The scenery, the flowers, the fountains, made one feel like he was visiting wonderland. The balmy air was invigorating. "Isn't it a lovely place, John?"

"As lovely as the heiress," laughingly replied John.

"Since you esteem the lady so highly, why is it you do not pay her court, John?"

"Well, simply because she displays naught but mere respect for me. She does not care for me, that's all."

The Miller residence was a marble structure of architectural genius, with surroundings that pre-

sented a perfect picture of beauty, picturesqueness itself.

John and Lewis lingered at the fountain with its statuettes spurting the silvery waters that teased the little fishes as it rained upon them, darting and gleefully attempting to catch the bubbles on the water.

"Look at these water-babies," exclaimed John.

"Yes, and interesting, too," answered Lewis. He continued:

"There is a lesson in their merriment."

"What is it, dear boy?" queried John.

"Can't you see how disappointed these little creatures appear to be after they fail in their pursuit, see the bubbles extinguish before them? This may be applied to mankind. Disappointments seem to be the lot of man. As the little fishes in the water vainly endeavor to swallow the bubbles, also to the little child with golden hair attempting to catch the glancing sunbeams; thence to the old man, who, with whitened locks and bent frame, pursues some scheme of wealth. Disappointment is the almost inevitable consequence."

"Well, well," replied John; "quite correct. It is well for us that the future is veiled from our eyes, else we would weary of the trials and allurements that make up the sum of our existence."

Miss Miller was busily engaged in plucking violets along a picturesque lake a few steps from where Lewis and John were standing, when, to her utmost joy, she perceived them coming toward her.

"My dear Miss Miller," excitedly spoke John, as they shook hands. "This place is lovely beyond comparison. Kindly pardon our trespassing."

"Welcome, indeed. This is truly my pleasantest surprise," joyously replied Miss Miller.

"Thank you," said Lewis, a little abashed; and speaking again in a more composed tone, as he held Miss Miller's hand in his: "We shall deem it quite a privilege and pleasure, dear Miss Miller, to help you gather these modest little flowerettes."

"Oh, you are so kind. I am gathering these for an invalid friend. She adores flowers."

"Pardon my interrupting," said John, "but where is my fiancée, Miss Edna?"

"Why, how thoughtless of me. She departed hardly an hour past," answered Miss Miller.

"Unhappy I am at the news," disappointedly responded John.

"Allow me to make a statement: She will be delighted to have you go for her. I shall write her, requesting the honor of her presence at tea with us."

"Good; I accept your offer, my dear mademoiselle. I shall not tarry now. Please be kind to my esteemed

friend," with a gesture and bowing to Lewis. "You will find him quite sentimental—and scholarly, too."

"Away with you," motioned Lewis.

"We shall expect you and Miss Edna shortly," added Miss Miller.

"Easy to see that the gentleman is earnestly in love," gently uttered she, "and I venture to say that it is a mutual affection."

"Yes, John is seriously in love, and I do hope he will be happy."

"I understand that you and Mr. Russell are bosom friends."

"Extremely so; we were chums at school, and our friendship ripened into constant companionship."

"So I can see. You were educated at the Monastery, were you not, Mr. Ferry?"

"Yes, ma'am. I was fortunate enough to make my classical studies in that renowned institution."

They strolled along, stooping here and there, searching for the violets under their green foliage, that looked like an emerald carpet laid around the lake. Finally the rustic bridge was reached, and there, under the weeping willows, they took seats and admired the swan, with its train of little ones, feeding among the lilies in the lake.

"This lake certainly brings to my mind an incident of days of yore," pensively spoke Lewis.

"May I ask what the incident was?"

"Certainly. If you will bear patience with me, I shall relate it."

"Most pleausurably," answered she.

"Once upon a time I was rather disconsolate; nothing seemed to please me. It was as though I lived merely to repine and lament. Consequently, one summer afternoon I left home and wandered in the meadow until I reached a lake, where I stopped, under a large willow tree, in the boughs of which were audible moaning sounds. I was lonely. My heart was sad, and gradually my meditation developed into a deep slumber, and there, far from home, I dreamed that I was on a long journey, and every person that I came in contact with seemed to taunt me, until I met a man who took pity on me and who accompanied me on a long journey; but my destination I failed to see, because my dream was broken by the rattling of an enormous snake. It was right near me, and I awoke to hear its rattle once more, and you may be sure, Miss Miller, I left my comfortable position in great haste."

Miss Miller clasped her hands in excitement, and opened her large brown eyes in amazement. "Mr. Ferry, did you really see it, the serpent? The very thought of it makes me shuddder."

"Yes, lady, I really heard it and had a fair view of

it, too. Now, pardon me, dear lady. I am sorry that my narrative has moved you so, but really this lake reminds me of the lake at home."

"You have not been rude, Mr. Ferry. I was simply scared for you."

"Thank you; you are very kind."

Presently the distant chimes of the bells were heard. It was really pleasing to Lewis to lend his ear to its echoes. "What bells are those, Miss Miller?" asked Lewis.

"Bells of a convent. I think the sound of those bells is as mournful as the inmates therein."

"Mournful, Miss? Why should you call it so?"

"Well, Mr. Ferry, I must admit the presence of those grave nuns gives me a perfect horror. It appears to me that they are always thinking of death and its consequences. Still, I have great reverence and sympathy for them."

"Why shouldn't they think of death?" replied Lewis. "Unfortunately, we poor souls too seldom give it a thought. Better far if we did, for it would serve to make us more thoughtful in this world of temptations and trials."

"Undoubtedly true. I should imagine you are profoundly religious," continued Miss Miller. "Allow me to propound some questions that have occurred to me frequently, but which I have been unable to

understand clearly. First and foremost, Mr. Ferry, what is true religion?"

"True religion, Miss Miller, is the poetry of the heart, the love of God. It has enchantment useful to our manners; it gives us both happiness and virtue."

"Therefore, you would say that true religion gives a cheerful and happy turn to the mind and even procures for us the highest pleasures?"

"My dear lady, there is not a heart but has its moments of longing for something better, nobler, holier than it knows now; this bespeaks the religious aspiration of every heart. Genius without religion is only a lamp on the outer gate of your palace. It serves to cast a gleam of light on those that are without, while the inhabitants sit in darkness."

"Then you would say that religion is not proved and established by logic?"

"No, ma'am; it is, of all the mysteries of nature and the human mind, the most mysterious. It is a matter of feeling and not of opinion."

"Why is it, Mr. Ferry, that some well-meaning Christians tremble for their salvation?"

"For the serious reason that they have never gone through that valley of tears and sorrow which they have been taught to consider as an ordeal that must be passed through, before they can arrive at regen-

eration. I can but think that such Christians mistake the nature of religion."

"Pardon my boldness, Mr. Ferry, but let me ask you another important question. What are the modes of bearing the ills of life?"

"My conception of this difficult question is that there are three: Indifference, which is the most common; philosophy, which is the most ostentatious; and religion, which is the most effectual."

"I agree with you, Mr. Ferry," said she. "I think philosophy is a goddess whose head is indeed in Heaven, but whose feet are upon earth; who attempts more than she can accomplish, and promises more than she performs."

"Correct, Miss Miller, and I may add that she can teach us to hear of the trials and sufferings of others, but it is religion only that can teach us to bear our own with resignation.

"There they come," said Lewis, as he noticed John and his fiancée coming toward the bridge.

"Why, yes, and we shall have to terminate our much-enjoyed conversation. Really, Mr. Ferry, words are inadequate to express my thanks to you for your well-deserved instructions. I have at last found a friend who can enlighten me in my perplexities."

"The pleasure is all mine, dear lady."

"Well, a penny for your thoughts," exclaimed John, saluting them. "You two seem to be so pensive. What are you feeding on?"

"Nothing that would interest you two, with all your plans and ideals," laughingly spoke Miss Miller.

Lewis only smiled and observed John and his fiancée.

"Oh, how lovely," surprisedly exclaimed Edna, pointing to the Marie Antoinette basket filled with violets that Miss Miller had hung to the branch of a weeping willow that shaded the bridge.

"Edna, dear, they are for our poor unfortunate friend, Madame Locke. She feels so comforted when any one sends her flowers. You may pluck as many as you wish, dear, here along the lake."

"And I shall carry the basket, John, and you shall gather them while I admire and caress these dainty little blossoms," laughed Edna. "John, I will have my way."

"John, old pal, I see where you have a job on hand," said Lewis.

"Very true, always busy—no time for pleasure," said John.

Edna was a beautiful girl in every sense of the word—a perfect beauty; and this afternoon she looked her best in the smart gown of *peau de soie*, with a thin and filmy scarf of oriental lace artistical-

ly placed over her decollete neck and bare, well-rounded arms.

As John handed her the violets she would press them to her lips and then pin them in her bodice.

"Honestly, I must say Edna is the picture of loveliness," pleasantly spoke Miss Miller.

"Truly a beautiful woman," answered Lewis.

"I do hope their union will be one of eternal happiness," said she.

"You have voiced my feelings," said he. "John is a fine chap."

"Mr. Ferry," interrupted she, "I wish to ask you to the drawing room and have you sing for us."

"Do I sing? Your sense of hearing has betrayed you, Miss Miller. You most certainly were misinformed."

The drawing room was conspicuous by splendor. It displayed taste and magnificence. Lewis was admitted into the gorgeous room with all ceremony.

"Mother, I wish to introduce you to Mr. Ferry, John's intimate friend."

Mrs. Miller bowed in a stately manner, with her lorgnette in one hand, ready for use. "I am pleased to make your acquaintance, my dear sir."

"Mother, Mr. Ferry will favor us with a vocal solo. I feel sure that you will enjoy his singing. Mr. Ferry,

mother is quite an artist. She used to sing like a siren in her earlier days."

"Really, I beg to be excused. I am only a novice in the art. Won't you sing for me, Mrs. Miller?"

"With regret, Mr. Ferry, I have to decline. My voice has fled with my youth."

Mrs. Miller, far advanced in her fifties, was a great lady. Richly attired in black velvet, she was stately, but indifferent and cold. She hardly favored Lewis as a match for her daughter.

With all the richness of his barytone voice, Lewis held his audience spellbound, and at the finale he was applauded loudly.

John and Edna walked in from behind the portieres of scarlet velvet, enchanted by the voice.

Mrs. Miller complimented him in a stately manner, saying: "You are indeed the possessor of a grand voice, Mr. Ferry. The envy of your fellow-men."

"John, you are certainly misrepresenting yourself. You certainly have to sing," said Lewis. "Often-times he led the choir at vespers."

"Oh, I remember, once upon a time I was quite a bird at it."

"Now, listen to that. So you shall sing, my dear sir," excitedly spoke Edna.

"Please do," said Miss Miller, inspiringly.

"For the love of Mike, Lewis, why on earth did you breathe it? Now it will be my hour of shame and humiliation. You can simply look at me and see that I can't sing. I can crow, that's just about all."

"Your time has come," said Mrs. Miller, "and you may as well make a quick performance of it."

"Well, here I go," as he sat at the piano playing and singing: 'Peg o' My Heart, I love you, sweet little girl, I miss you.' Pardon me," and he stopped suddenly, "but my breath is so short—I am unable to continue."

The applause was loud.

"A remarkable voice. That was a beautiful solo," said Edna.

"Yes, ma'am, so low you couldn't hear it."

"John, we shall be delighted to have you and your esteemed friend dine with us," said Mrs. Miller, bringing her lorgnette to her eyes in scrutiny.

"We accept the invitation with great pleasure."

Mrs. Miller was anxious to get better acquainted with Lewis. She sometimes thought he would do.

After the sumptuous repast the little party repaired to the spacious art room, where some of Miss Miller's paintings were exhibited.

"This is my best work," said Miss Miller, pointing to a large picture of a child with a mastiff. "The title is 'Friends.' "

"Superb," exclaimed Lewis. "You are undoubtedly an artist of exceptional ability."

"Indeed, it seems to have life," said John. "The title is very appropriate."

"Yes, friendship is the sweetest and most satisfactory connection in life," said Miss Miller. "The philosophy of it goes to show that it is ever ready to prove its courage and sincerity to the weak."

"Now that we are all so very much interested in the significance of this title, I shall be inquisitive. What is friendship? In other words, where do we find true friendship?" asked Mrs. Miller.

"Now, Lewis, you are the ablest one to define and answer Mrs. Miller's question," spoke John sincerely.

"Well, really," he replied, "I have known friendship to bloom only in the soul of a noble and self-sacrificing heart; wherever it is watered with the dews of kindness and affection, there you may be sure to find it."

"Mr. Ferry," inquired Mrs. Miller, "have you ever noticed that there are persons who, from pride and disposition, appear to be altogether independent of the regard of their fellow-beings?"

"Yes, madam, but was there ever a human heart that did not, at some time, in some tender and yearning hour, long for the sympathy of other hearts?"

"Perhaps," answered the lady. "May I ask another question?"

"Surely," laughingly said Lewis.

"What would you consider a permanent test of friendship?"

"Adversity is the only true balance to weigh friends in. Prosperity gives friends, and adversity tries them."

"Well defined," thankfully answered Mrs. Miller.

"Now that we thoroughly understand the merits and methods of securing friendship, I shall suggest that we depart, thanking our hostess and her charming daughter for the splendid manner in which they make one feel at home," suggested John.

Lewis added: "I thank you for your entertainment."

"We hope to see you oftener," replied Miss Miller, as she shook his hand, her eyes full of meaning and longing.

CHAPTER TENTH.

“If you would compare two men, you must know them both.”

Lewis is in his study, trying to catch a glimpse of the possibilities in store for him. He must have an aim in life, for it's the aim that makes the man. He does not want a low and sordid aim; therefore, with his talent and advantages, he has decided to mitigate social evil and promote benevolent projects; to sum up, be a philanthropist. He is wealthy, and shall make it his aim to assist the needy and poor, for he knows that doing good is the only certain happy action of a man's life. A large heart of charity is a noble thing, and the most benevolent soul lies nearest to God.

He remembers the instructions of the Abbot, that man appears in his best light and grandest aspect when he appears as the practical follower of Him Who went about doing good. He is laying the foundation for a noble and useful career. He is planting the seed of charity that will grow to bless and save

the sufferings of our fellow-men. Also, a man should fear when he enjoys only what good he does publicly, lest it should prove to be the publicity, rather than the charity, that he loves.

A conquerer is regarded with awe, the wise man commends our esteem, but it is the benevolent man who wins our affection.

"Lewis, old chap, here is a letter for you," said John, rushing in on Lewis and tapping him on the shoulder. "Wake up! In reveries again?"

"Thanks, John, this is from the Abbot."

"Is it? Then please read aloud. I would like to hear some of his dope again."

"No, sir; since it is dope, you shall not hear it."

"Now, old boy, forgive me, I meant to be good. Now read it, and we shall call it a lecture."

"My Dear Child—Your letter was truly a source of pleasure to me. It was so full of vital information."

Lewis read on in silence, then continued:

"Before it escapes my memory, I wish to state that you failed to tell me who this amiable friend is, whom you mentioned rather indirectly."

"Hey there," exclaimed John! "See, I knew you cared for her. Just had to write about her, eh? Ha, ha!" exclaimed John.

"Now, here is the lecture," exclaimed Lewis, as he read on.

"No, no, keep on with the other passage. Don't stop," replied John.

"You shall not know the rest; but, John, dear brother, this part:

"I am happy to know that John has found his help-mate. May God bless him. Convey to him my felicitations. But you, who love him as your brother, see that it is a union of hearts, and not merely infatuation. For the affection that should link man and wife is a far holier and more enduring thing than the enthusiasm of young love."

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Cut it short. I should like to inform this man, this woman-hater, that I am conscious enough to know what I'm about. Down with the fool," and he walked out, vexed—angry.

Lewis, pained by the action of his friend, buried his face in his hands and deliberated on the carelessness and hastiness in which John was selecting his bride. "He's in love with her pretty face; yes, that is all—nothing more."

"He has never stopped to consider further. Why, just last evening, she was trying to effect a close relation with Mr. Blake. I noticed her in the conservatory at Mrs. Miller's. But he seems to doubt me. I have warned him, tried to argue with him; but, like

all foolish lovers, he is blind. Ah! love, it has been said, in the common acceptance of the term, is folly; but love in its purity, its loftiness, its unselfishness, is not only a consequence, but a proof of our moral excellence. Marriage, in comparison, is the most important and holy relation of life, involving the most sacred responsibilities and influences, social, civil and religious, that bear upon men, and must not be entered upon in hot haste or blind stupidity; unfortunately it is, by a great majority of men and women."

Arousing himself from his meditation, he found John in his office, walked up to him and faced him boldly.

"John, tell me," with a look of scorn and disgust on his face, suddenly giving way to a radiant smile, "how do you feel, old pal?"

John drew him to his chair, and spoke softly: "Lewis, you are my dearest friend on this green earth, and I love you deeply. I would do anything for you. I consider it a privilege to have you for my one true friend, but you know that friendship is a vase which, when it is once flawed by violence or accident, may as well be broken at once. It never can be trusted afterwards, hence I pray you to never again hurt my feelings by referring to Edna as being unworthy of me. You are aware of the fact that I love

the girl, and our wedding is announced, consequently, old friend, help me to make it a success. Time will prove to you that I have made a good choice."

"John, I beg you to forgive me if I have in any way injured your feelings. The affection that I entertain for you is firm and lasting. No boundary would put a limit to its growth.

"Now, we shall not bring back dead issues. Let's shake hands and allow me to wish you Godspeed in your new life."

John pressed him to his bosom with tears of joy. "Dear old boy, with you and Edna I shall be happiness itself."

CHAPTER TENTH.

“Beauty without virtue is like a flower without perfume.”

Edna felt a thrill of pleasurable agitation over her wedding gown. It was the symbol, she explained, of so much that is gay and delightful—the joy of life translated into silk and lace.

Edna was unquestionably a pretty woman, a typical brunette, with cherry-red lips perpetually displaying a set of pearly white teeth, indeed charming as she was beautiful, but, unfortunately, aware of the fact, and she naturally expected to be admired and loved by all men.

John, the eminent medical specialist, was desperately in love with this beauty. She had been made an orphan and was adopted by a woman who had lavished her wealth to gratify Edna's desires. It was the greatest desire of Edna's foster mother to make the wedding a function that would be largely dis-



"The Joy of Life Translated Into Silk and Lace."

cussed, and called the social event of the season. The sacred edifice was a veritable garden of ferns and roses of every hue. The brilliant lights lent charm and enchantment and presented a garden scene under skies of brilliant constellations. At seven o'clock in the evening, as the clock of the cathedral chimed the hour, Edna, attired in pale, slightly dulled blue crepe meteor, silver slippers with buckles studded with diamonds, entered the edifice. Her veil of tulle was artistically draped and held in place by a diamond sunburst, a gift from the groom. She carried a bouquet of white carnations and lilies of the valley. She entered accompanied by her foster mother, who looked stately in silver gray satin with a picture hat to match. Next came the bridesmaids, charmingly gowned in shell pink charmeuse, silver slippers with gold buckles, gifts from the bride, with hats and accessories to match.

John was exceptionally handsome in his dress suit, his face radiant with happiness, and accompanied by Lewis, his best man, met Edna at the foot of the sanctuary, over which hung two hearts made of scintillant lights.

The ceremony was an impressive one in every way. During the signing of the register the prima donna, Madame LeDoux, sang, in her rich contralto voice, "O, Promise Me." Then suddenly the glowing

hearts suspended over them were extinguished, to reappear as one big heart in red lights.

The sermon of the officiating minister was inspiring and truthful:

“True marriage, my dear friends, is the result of years of mutual endeavors to please, and it comes of patient efforts to learn each other’s disposition and tastes. It becomes you to resolve that you will be happy together; or that if you suffer, it will be in perfect sympathy. You are not to let any human being step between you under any circumstances. The heart demands that the man shall not sit silent, reticent and self-absorbed in the midst of his family. The wife who forgets to provide for her husband’s tastes and wishes renders her home undesirable for him. Let him be loved, honored and cherished in fulfillment of the marriage vows.

“While you are careful to adorn your person with new and clean apparel, for no woman can long preserve affection if she is neglectful on this point, be still more attentive in ornamenting your mind with meekness, peace and cheerfulness

“Cherish your home; that is, let your employment and pleasures be domestic.

“And the husband: I exhort you, love your wife even as you love yourself. Continue through life the same manly tenderness that in youth gained her affections. Devote yourself to her, and after the hours

of business, yet the pleasures which you most highly prize be found in her society. Let her know that her care and love are noticed and appreciated, her approval sought and her judgment respected. Remember what your wife was when you took her, not from compulsion, but from your own choice, based on what you then considered her superiority to others.

“Furthermore, always bear in mind that God rules above you and a thousand influences work around you.”

The reception was held at Mrs. Miller’s suburban home. “A grand affair” is the only expression capable of doing it justice. After toasts were drunk to the health and happiness of the happy pair they were motored to John’s mansion, where everything was in readiness for the bridal tour to Australia.

Just as Lewis clasped John’s hand to bid him “bon voyage” he drew John to the library, and, with eyes dimmed with tears, again wished him all the happiness that words could express. “But there is something else,” said Lewis. “I would have given it to you before, John but, knowing how you dislike him, I refrained until now, when you must accept it.” And, drawing from his card case a miniature crucifix of gold, he presented it to John, saying: “With best wishes from the Abbot.”

John stood stockstill; his heart was touched—

words failed him. After some exertion he managed to say: "Thank him for me, dear boy. Tell him I trust it shall help to make me a better man, and, with this little reminder, I shall become worthy of the God who made me."

Lewis stood by the window and watched them leave.

"Happiness," said he, "is much like to-morrow—only one day from us, yet never arriving."

In the ideal scene, everything is painted in bright colors, thought Lewis. There are no disappointments in that picture; but, in the reality, they are sure to appear. Ah! to be happy is the summing up of all the ends and aims on earth. It is a desire implanted in the human breast by the Creator for purposes known only to His wisdom. Indeed, there is a distinction between theoretic conclusions and experience. What we conceive a source of enjoyment, by experience is found false and worthless.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

“O! let us walk the world, so that our love burns like a blessed beacon, beautiful, upon the walls of life’s surrounding dark.”
(Massey.

Solitude reigned in the mansion since John was gone. Nevertheless, Lewis seemed satisfied at times, notwithstanding the fact that he missed his friend considerably.

He would sit in John’s office all alone. Everything reminded him of his friend. How he longed for his speedy return! Love was animating his heart, sympathy breathing in every tone. He devoutly wished John well. Tears of pity gathered in his eyes and trickled down his cheeks. He felt the absence of his friend, for John was so much to him.

Seated at the desk, he thought of writing a short missive to the Abbot, apprising him of the fact that he really was pleased and contented here in the outer world. He had made some firm friends, and cherished the greatest regard for them all. He was truly

happy; but, nevertheless, he oftentimes cast a thought on the good old friends of the Monastery.

Presently his eyes, always in scrutiny, discovered a bit of pink stationery among the papers on the desk. Picking it up he unfolded it, and, to his surprise, it was a missive from Edna to John. Forgetting himself, he read it.

“You asked me a very momentous question. Smarty, I shall not answer it, and trust that henceforth you will meet me in some degree with a little concession to my individual tastes. Now beware, if you intend to arouse my jealousy, let me tell you that it is a very dangerous game to play. How dare you accuse me of thoughtless coquetry? What motives actuated you to make such a charge? I wish you to be impressed with the fact, sir, that I do not encourage the attentions of other men. It occurs to me that we entered into our engagement rather hastily, and that I was persuaded, against my better judgment, to fix the date for our marriage so soon. I trust that I have been sufficiently explicit and will add that, unless you come to see me immediately, I shall be compelled to act differently.

“Yours, anxiously waiting,

“EDNA.”

He flung the letter back on the desk angrily.

“Curse her, traitress! There is no womanly pride

in you. What is beauty without wisdom, beauty without chastity?"

Pacing the room in his agitation he recalled the many times he had endeavored to convince John that this deceitful thing did not care a snap of her finger for him. It was all a farce, and some day he would be forced to see it, to his utter pain and remorse. "Too late," cried he, running his long fingers through his hair nervously.

"What will be the outcome of it all—the end, the finish? Oh! merciful God, have compassion on my unfortunate friend. Help him, dear Lord, to have fortitude to bear it patiently with resignation to the Divine Will.

"She is false to him. That is easily seen. The letter is sufficient evidence. Fool that he is! Blind, mad, infatuated!

"Sad is the thought," said he, "that in this world of ours there are so many lives shadowed, and by what? Disappointment. We can only drop a tear over him whose errors wrought his own recompense."

Yes, true were his words. Better for us, too, that the future is veiled from our eyes, else we would weary of the trials and disillusionments that make up the sum of our existence.

"However, I trust that it will not be as cruel as it appears. Still, it is sometimes God's mercy that men in their eager pursuits are baffled and that we

mount to Heaven mostly on the ruins of our cherished schemes, finding in our failures our real successes. Life is indeed a variegated scene, full of trials and full of joys; bright dreams, some fulfilled, more disappointed. Perhaps the truest philosophy is not to expect much in our plans and hopes. But alas! how apt we are to be oversanguine. We are certainly confronted with two ends, success or failure, in everything.

“To win the former requires so much perseverance and labor. We must be able to simulate and to dissimulate—and this is where poor John failed. He did not have the will to make the necessary exertion and resistance. He lacked courage; was unable to discern her many defects.

“He who will persevere in a course of wisdom, rectitude and benevolence is sure to gather round him friends who will be true and faithful, but she possessed none of these virtues. How can she be true and faithful? Ah! if he had only had the will to reject her when she displayed such baseness and ignorance. Says a common-sense author, ‘Intellect is but the half; the will is the driving wheel, the spring of motive power.’

“There is a class of narrow wits who never succeed for want of courage. Their understanding is of that kind which is unable to discriminate or surmount difficulties.

“They do not know what force of character means. They seem to have no backbone, only the semblance of a vertebral column. Thus a great deal of unhappiness, and much of the vice, is owing to weakness of purpose.”

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

If marriage increases the cares it also brightens the pleasures of life. If it sometimes seems a hindrance to success, in countless instances it is the incentive which calls forth the best part of man's nature, rouses him from selfish apathy, and inspires in him generous principles and high resolves.

Someone has said, "Marriage is a school, teaching the exercise of virtue, and, though marriage hath cares, yet single life hath desires which are more troublesome and more dangerous, and very often end in sin."

Though a great deal can be urged against hasty and injudicious marriages, still there is a time in the life of every individual when it would be a great deal wiser for him to marry than to remain single. There are some men whom we call "old bachelors." We say they are selfish, cold-hearted, but once they were as warm-hearted and generous as anyone could be; they who once poured out their affections on those unworthy of them, the realization of which

changed their whole nature; also some whom the world calls "old maids," but who are wedded as truly to a tear-stained package as if it were the being it represents to them. These missives once belonged to him, in the old sweet days of yore. Years have passed, and nothing remains but the dear dream that never knew reality.

Lewis, in his study, weighed and examined both sides, and finally, concluding that he, too, should contemplate matrimony, but naturally, and in the style of common sense, said: "In the minds of all properly constituted individuals there exists the hope and expectation of marriage."

Fully convinced that he had found one woman who entertained in her heart deep sympathy and love for him—one who, if he should be overtaken by misfortune, or if trials and temptations should beset him, would stand by him and sympathize, as most assuredly, all through life, man needs a woman's love, one whose heart beats with the same truth and affection, in gladness and sadness, in storm or shine—after searching the secret chambers of his heart, he anxiously penned this missive:

"Dear Miss Miller—I have just purchased tickets for Friday evening to see 'Everywoman.' I write to ask the honor of your company to witness this much-

talked-of opera. Kindly favor me with an early reply. With much admiration, believe me

"Your friend,

"LEWIS."

The play was unquestionably the best, displaying woman in her pilgrimage of love.

"Be merciful, be just, be fair to every woman, everywhere; her faults are many, nobody's to blame."

"The majority of women shun truth and fail to find true love," said Lewis. "Without this virtue there is no reliance upon language, no confidence in friendship, no security in promises. Truth needs nothing to help it out. Strict veracity requires something more than merely the speaking of truth. There are lying looks, as well as lying words. The love of truth is the grand spring source of integrity."

"After all," replied she, "the most natural beauty in the world is moral truth; for all beauty is truth. Yes, nothing but truth can give us happiness. Everything must be governed by truth."

"Indeed, the habitual observance of truth is a bright and shining quality on the part of anyone who strives to make the most of life's possibilities," said Lewis.

"Modesty," added Miss Miller, "also plays an excellent part. Really, the lesson is great and true."

"Modesty," said Lewis, "is the crowning ornament of womanly beauty. It gives grace to youthful figures, and imparts a pleasing virtue to years. It softens the asperities of poverty, and is a beautiful setting for wealth."

"Yes, and it makes life pleasant to the one who exercises the virtue."

"And last, but not least, love," gently spoke Lewis. "Love, in its purity, its unselfishness, is not only a consequence, but a proof of moral excellence," continued he. "As woman is not woman until she has known love, neither is man a complete man until he finds love. It is the melody of humanity."

Added Miss Miller: "The poet, Browning, says, 'All love renders wise in a degree.'"

"Yes," answered Lewis, "the most gifted men have been the truest lovers. It inspires sympathy, mutual faith and confidence."

The couple were just back from the theatre and were discussing the play, when, presently, the hall clock chimed the hour of twelve, terminating their earnest discussion.

"I honestly regret to leave good company," continued Lewis, "but the clock has bade me depart."

"I shall say au revoir, Mr. Ferry, trusting to see you again real soon."

"Thank you, my dear lady. I shall be delighted to

call again on Sunday evening, if it is agreeable to you."

"Certainly it will be truly agreeable."

Back in his room, Lewis was full of hope and enthusiasm. He had proven the powers of love. But he must have patience. For it is said that he who has patience can have what he will. There is no road too long to the man who advances deliberately and without undue haste. "If I take unto me a wife I hope to God that I shall be conscious enough to know what she is, and what she will be to me. Each day brings me nearer and nearer to her. She is doubtless an exception in the feminine world. Yet, be still, my heart, the time shall come when your palpitation will be eased by true affection and devotion. Time, the great magician, will work its charms. Again, let me be patient. And to know how to wait is the great secret of success. Oh! of all lessons that humanity teaches, the hardest is to wait. True it is that the fruits that are best worth plucking usually ripen the most slowly."

Still, it is the tendency of all lovers to be in a hurry. But, because love is the best thing on earth, it is to be handled tenderly, for impatience kills it.

In the wee hours of the morning Lewis was still awake. A thousand different thoughts harassed his mind. And as in a delirium he could see her, filled

with sympathy, radiant with love, obedient with respect.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

“Punishment follows hard on crime.”

Three years have elapsed. John and Edna are at home.

This morning Edna is in the best of spirits, delighted with her gorgeous home, as she calls it. John wears a broad smile, and nothing is too hard or too strenuous for him, now that he is settled, and, as he puts it, with the “dearest and sweetest obtainable.”

“Is there anything that I can do to help make the ball a greater success?” asked John.

“I hardly think, love, that there is anything omitted.”

“Good! Now my wish is to see you look your best tonight.”

“Love, it shall be as you wish. All to please you, my precious,” encircling her arms around his neck in an ecstasy of kisses.

John, reclining in his comfortable Morris chair,

petted his wife and whispered endearing words that made Edna laugh aloud.

"Oh, you are so jealous," said she. "Have no fear. My love for you has increased tenfold, so much so that I cannot bear to be away from you, love. I miss you the very moment you are out of my sight. How happy I am, here in our palace. I was really lucky to capture you," she said unintentionally, printing a fervent kiss on his waiting lips.

Ah! nothing can compete with human deceitfulness. Nothing can be more unjust than to play upon the belief of a confiding person, to make him suffer for his good opinion. A course of deception always defeats the true end of society.

"Dovie," remarked John, "I understand that Lewis and Miss Miller are staunch friends."

"Why, yes, he is attentive to her," pausing in her reply and staring at the floor contemplatively. Quietly and pleadingly she continued: "Love, dear, I sometimes think that this friend of yours is mysterious, or, I dare say, funny. There is something unsound about the man, whom you admire and really love as much as you do me. But I know enough of human nature to detect distrustful persons. Why, whenever he sees me alone he looks at me with a disdainful look, or his countenance is stamped with the thought, the contemplation of evil."

"Stop! Hush!" interrupted John. "You are la-

boring under the wrong impression. Lewis is just what you think him not to be—a true gentleman, a genius.”

“Ha! you doubt me and will take up for him,” jumping from his lap in a fit of anger and raising herself to her full height. She spoke in tones of anger: “Understand, I’m not so easily deceived. I consider the purest atmosphere is contaminated into a deadly miasma wherever this evil genius obtrudes. I dread him; to me he is like the sting of a scorpion. You shall see! Time will tell that he is a nettle destroying our peace.”

“Dearest wife, you speak cruelly and unknowingly. It is far wiser to take the more charitable view of our fellow-men. Life takes its hue in great degree from the color of our own minds. You have no reason for making these charges against Lewis.”

“Stop! I shall impress you with the fact that unless he is sent away from this place I will go. Do you understand? I will not permit myself to be scorned here or any other place.”

“Remember, dear,” said John, “the people who are easily excited miss a great deal of happiness. Your temper will destroy your own comfort as well as that of your friends.”

“Pshaw! Friends! I do not consider him such. True wisdom points the necessity of prudence at all times.”

"Correct you are; we should learn to command our feelings, and act prudently in all concerns of life. It will prepare us to meet emergencies with calmness and fortitude."

"I am prepared to act just as I see fit, sir. And again, hear me: Tonight is the ball. He will be here to make merry with us. I will be, as usual, civil to him, but tomorrow he must go. Or let him marry as you did, and settle down in his own home."

"Dearest," and John, seeing that she meant every word of it, took her in his arms, half crying, half caressing, "how can I drive my dear and tried friend from my home? Oh! for God's sake be considerate, be fair. He who has been so kind to me! Go, dear," and he endeavored to lead her to her boudoir. "Think it over, and you will feel that you are only angry with Lewis for some minor cause. Consideration is what you need to convince you that he is friend to both of us."

She extricated herself from his embrace, and faced him boldly. "You do not seem to have grasped my determination. I say, very imperatively, he shall depart. Tomorrow you must choose. Let him go and I will stay, or I will go and he shall stay." She walked into her room and slammed the door behind her.

"Never does a person betray his or her own character more vividly than in his or her manner of por-

traying another's. Those who attempt to bring down and depreciate those who are above them do not elevate themselves thereby. He who indulges in slander is like one who throws ashes through the window, which come back to the same place and cover him all over."

Never speak ill of another, even with a cause. We all have our faults, and if we expect charity from the world we must be charitable ourselves.

Give no heed to the infamous story handed you by a person known to be an enemy to the one he is defaming. Never condemn your neighbor unheard, for there are always two sides to a story. It is a sign of a bad disposition to take pleasure in hearing ill of our friends. He who sells his friend's credit at a low rate makes the market for another to buy his at the same rate.

Remember, on many a mind and many a heart there are sad inscriptions engraved by the tongue of slander. They are more durable than the impression of the diamond on the glass, for the inscription of the diamond may be destroyed by a blow, but the impression on the heart will last forever. Know that it is always the best fruits that the birds pick at, that the wasp lights on the finest flowers, and slanderers are like flies that overlook all a man's good parts in order to alight upon his worst.

Yet, most satisfactorily, truth, the child of time, ere long will appear to vindicate thee.

Lewis emerged from the library, where he had been in deep study, and met John in the hall.

"Good morning, Monsieur, how art thou?"

"My dear friend, how do you feel?" inquired John, pensively.

Lewis immediately noticed the perplexed expression in the sad smile of John.

They walked out together, and John broke the silence.

"Dear Lewis, do you not think that Edna is too deeply involved in the whirl of society?"

"John, society is beneficial if one knows the right principles and conduct."

"Why do you give me that answer? Do you have the least shadow of a doubt as to whether Edna knows the right principles of society?"

"John, my dear friend, I do not feel that I can answer you. You should make it a point to find out."

Lewis excused himself, strolling out to his daily walk, out to the country for the pure and wholesome air. He never failed to respond to this ardent desire. On the way he pondered over many things. Said he, "I may have misjudged Edna, but it is only the shallow who strive to attract attention by pretentious claims. The ocean's depths are mute; it is

only along the shallow shores that the roar of the breakers is heard. It has been remarked that the modest deportment of the wise, when contrasted to the assuming air of the vain and ignorant, may be compared to the difference of wheat which, while its ear is empty, holds up its head proudly, but as soon as it is filled with grain bends modestly down and withdraws from observation. Therefore, I have little regard for those bold, frivolous, wicked and immodest society characters.

“What so quickly commands our good wishes and respect as modesty? It is the real ornament of womanly beauty, and the honor of manly powers. Why, yes, it is the key that unlocks the door of love and respect.”

On and on he strolled. He seemed to have forgotten himself this morning, for he had traversed the meadow and was now near a lake among the cypress trees. Hark! He heard the bark of a dog. There, near him, stood a log cabin. He stopped and inquired who lived there, when a white-haired, famished looking old man appeared in the doorway and spoke abruptly:

“What do you say? Whom do you seek?”

“I only wish for a drink of water, my kind sir.”

“Step right in, and I will refresh you.”

Lewis obeyed, and sat on a box by the door.

The strange man, whose eyes were sunken and

bloodshot, his hair long and white, his clothing neglected, giving Lewis a long and searching gaze, queried: "Where do you hail from, youngster?"

"Sir, I am from the city."

"What canst thou seek out here in this God-forsaken place?" in a voice that bespoke discontent.

"The title does not become these beautiful surroundings and your hospitality. I am a believer in the Omnipotent and His works, and I find pleasure and rest out here. It enables me to think freely, and to deliberate clearly on a topic of much consequence."

"A topic of consequence?" muttered the hermit, fixing his eyes on the floor in deep thought.

"I am endeavoring to solve the meaning, the purpose running through the tangled web of life," spoke Lewis smilingly.

"I see, indeed." And seating himself on a bottomless chair opposite Lewis, he cleared his throat, smoothed his long hair, then proceeded in a slow and pondering voice:

"You have broached a problem that you can never solve now; but just too late, in your declining years, you will clearly see it all. At your age the future is but a phantom bright; the present stern and real; but you, yourself, shape the joy, the fear, the woe of which the coming life is made."

"My kind sir, I am really interested in you, because you seem to be so full of experience. Please, I

implore you, tell me what the years have brought to you."

"Young enthusiast, your straightforwardness and honest face have touched a responsive chord, and my heart urges me to yield and tell you what some day may be beneficial to you.

"Oh! indeed, sir, it will please me to listen to your good words and try to profit by them."

"Oh! Mon Dieu! The heart of the past, and the dreams of today." Waking as from a reverie, he spoke with much feeling: "Think ye, my young friend, that I cannot forget the past? My memory, though feeble, is still vivid with the scenes of my early days. Bear with me and I will relate my life, for it relieves me to pour out what is burdening me. Would that I had died rather than live with a bleeding heart and burning brain.

"Many years ago I was happy with my good old mother in a pleasant home, from which I looked at life with a heart full of *hopé*, building castles which faded long ago. It brings a bewitching strain from the harp of memory when I speak of the home that was the abode of affection. Now to the life of strife follow men. One evening, in a crowded ballroom, with its trailing silks and glittering jewels, where tireless feet tripped to the measure of its lively airs; where the tremulous laugh, the restless eye, bespoke the feverish yearning of hearts beneath satins and

laces, and suffocated with the intoxicating perfume of vanity and frivolity, full of a fair dream of a roseate future, interwoven with love's magic art—there, in all this merriment and unrestrained pleasure, I met the ideal of my dreams, a picture of loveliness, an heiress, an enchantress. She captivated me, and it is useless to say that I was proud to be in captivity. Being a promising young attorney, with a future that was the envy of every man at the bar, I felt that the time had come when I should have a helpmate. It seemed that we had been made for each other, and to delay our union would mean much to both of us. I proposed, she accepted. We planned a matrimonial alliance in which we would live and labor and make every personal sacrifice with gladness, and that without each other we would not know how to live.

“But alas! to my grief and disappointment, I was too easily captivated by a winning exterior. Each day brought the realization that I had trusted too much to the impulse of the heart. As discretion tempers passion, I found out, too late, that it was precisely this quality which was absent in my courtship. Ah! young man, heed the voice of your conscience before you enter the bonds of wedlock. It is your wise counsellor. I was dazzled, infatuated; it bewildered my imagination, and I overlooked the fact that

true affection required solid support. I had never given it a moment's consideration that, in the selection of a wife, a pure, loving heart and good common sense are many times more valuable than personal beauty or wealth.

"Unfortunately, I did not have sufficient moral stamina to enable me to resist the infatuation, the passion. She, likewise, did not possess that pure, uncontaminated feeling which alone capacitates a woman for rightly appreciating the loving nature of a husband. One year, and our home was a dismal abode. It lacked harmony; it stood like a harp without strings. In form and outline, it suggested music, but no melody arose from the empty space, and thus it happened that my home was unattractive, dreary and dull.

"The advent of a little cherub in our household inspired me with new hopes and plans, but—to make it still harder—she accused me of disliking the child. Oh! my God, how unjust it was! My dear child, if I could only see you, hear you say, 'Father, I love you; I shall take care of you, administer to your sufferings'"—there his voice faltered. He trembled from head to foot. Finally he composed himself and continued: "I must finish; there's more to tell, but too painfully hard. I was not only deprived of the pleasure of being with her, but one night, on my

return home, I found my poor mother half frantic and sobbing aloud. She informed me that my wife had left with another man, and had taken little Edna with them. And this was the note she left," opening a little velvet case, and producing a sheet of paper yellow with age:

" 'I can no longer delude myself into the belief that I care for you. Our tastes are so opposite that our married life, under such circumstances, will not fail to result in unhappiness to both of us. Your ideas are centered in domestic quiet and repose, while my heart is set on the enjoyment of all the gaieties of life. When you review the occurrences of the past months, I am sure you will agree with me. I am leaving you and your hateful mother forever, and my only wish is to never be so unlucky as to see either of you again.

" 'Scornfully, I remain,

" 'JULIA.'

"Now, you see why my life is blighted. The terrible blow killed my poor mother, and it drove me mad, demented, to such an extent that I gave way to despair, abandoned my profession, became a wanderer searching for my dear child. Year after year found me deeper in misery and age, so much so that I became a hater of humanity. Eventually, I found

solace here in this deserted hut, and pray to the Savior of mankind to deliver me from this sad predicament real soon. I can bear it no longer," trembling like an aspen leaf, and lowering his head in anguish and pain.

Lewis clasped his hands sympathetically. "My kind sir, arouse yourself. In your life you lacked discretion; thus it is that you experienced what real sorrow was. Life is full of sorrowful scenes, so much so that it is sometimes unavoidable, and, under the guiding light of the present, it is easy enough to discover the mistakes of the past; and it would be easy to make advantageous changes were we allowed to go back and commence anew in the journey of life. And, naturally, you live in remorse, regret. Still, there is not a human heart which has not felt its potency; no age escapes it, and such will be the case as long as it is human to err."

"Ah! my shrewd thinker, I see that reflection is your good angel. Give heed to her warning voice, then will you live as becomes a man and immortal being. See me, my days are nearly ended. I think of the past and sigh for the days of youth. Ah! 'tis sad. They will never come to me again."

"Kind sir, I shall heed the voice of experience, and thus escape the vain regrets of later years. Now,

kind sir, how old was your child when your wife left you?"

"Only five months. O! memory, how it all comes back to me—her little ways and angelic voice that brightened my sad musings. That sweet little cry still rings in my ears."

Rising from his chair, the hermit walked to an old wornout trunk and drew from it a framed photograph, looked at it with eyes blurred and fiery—eyes that would have killed had they been pistols. He extended it to Lewis, saying: "This is the photograph of the woman who blighted my life."

Lewis held the picture in front of his face in order to hide the astonishment and sorrow in his eyes. "Oh! my God," escaped from his lips, as he looked at this perfect likeness of Edna, the wife of his dearest friend. "Oh! John, John, you are lost. She will betray you, just as her mother did!"

"Kind sir," said Lewis, returning the photograph to the hermit. "Did you make a careful search here?"

"No one seemed to be able to give me light in my quest. My wife left with a man totally unknown to me; consequently, I was at a loss to even get a clue."

Lewis buried his face in his hands, trying to think.

"Did your wife have any relatives?"

"Yes, an aunt; but I never knew her whereabouts.

At the death of my wife's mother this aunt left, and I never could locate her. I really believe she was instrumental in effecting the sudden disappearance of my wife. Ah! young man, nothing can compete with human deceitfulness, the vanity, empty mockery of hollow-hearted society butterflies."

"Also, dear sir, you should say that the actions of impulsive people are very distasteful. To-day, they thoughtlessly act as their impulses lead them; to-morrow, they are full of regrets about the mistakes and blunders of yesterday."

"Correct, you speak the truth, my young philosopher. It is the love of approbation and not the conscience that enacts the part of a moral sense in this case. There are so many strange anomalies in human nature."

"My kind sir, I do regret to leave you, but I must depart. I should like to visit you again."

"Ah! Indeed, it gives me pleasure, though I have lost the semblance of such a blessing. Come again. You are so thoughtful and learned. What makes you so sagacious? Where were you educated?"

"By my good friends, the monks. Have I not told you my quest?"

"God-speed—and may you never have to regret for inconsiderate actions."

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

“Fools must be taught by the result.”

Edna, gorgeously attired in a crimson frock of *peau de soie*, greeted her guests with much haughtiness, eager to convince that she alone was mistress of this mansion. The ball was unspeakably beautiful; a grand affair socially, and a perfect success. The spacious and commodious mansion was veritably magnificent. Everything was there to make it a beauty and joy. John seemed so entertaining. Nothing pleased him more than to see all of his friends gathered in one great multitude, making merry, in his own beautiful home.

Lewis and Miss Miller were earnestly involved in conversation, sitting among the palms and ferns in the conservatory. The lights were dim, of such a glow as to make it enchanting and peaceful.

“I am fully convinced,” uttered he, after a prolonged silence, “that marriage is the source from which originates the most beautiful glories of life;

but if entered understandingly and lived as becomes thoughtful human beings."

"Yes, marriage is a real affair," replied she. "It abounds in homely details, and also deepest cares; consequently, it should never be entered into blindly. We should know that it is the selection of a life companion, one who must bear, suffer and enjoy life with us in all its forms as well as its smiles."

"You speak conscientiously and from your heart," said he. "My dear little girl, the selection of a companion for life, as you said, one who will walk pleasantly and confidingly by your side through all the intricate and changing vicissitudes incident to mortal life should be a matter of care."

She bowed her head in silence like a lily too heavy for its stem.

He marshaled his feelings and irresistably spoke his admiration and deepest love, speaking softly, and encircling her waist with his arm.

"My dear little lady, I feel that our hearts are bound, as well as our sentiments, in a holy unity, and that, for each other, we would labor and make every personal sacrifice with gladness, and that, without each other, we would know not how to live. Now, is it not our privilege—yes, our duty, to form a matrimonial alliance? We so often delight in discussing this topic. And, dearest," pulling her closely to his

side, "are we not certain that the summit of our hopes is to enter into a league of perpetual friendship, of love divine?" kissing her warmly on the lips.

She gazed beamingly into his eyes, pausing, studying.

Embracing her, he begged her: "Speak, love, speak from your heart."

"I love you. How can I help it? You who have taught me what life really is, you who have taught me to love? Yes, I love you. It is the ruling element of my life," said she, affectionately.

"I thank you, love," answered he, "and may there be nothing holier in this life of ours than our pure and true love for each other."

"Hark! Hush!" Suddenly they were awakened by the rustling of silks, as a woman slipped by them, followed by a man, and took seats near them, hidden behind the dense palms, instantly engaging in a hurried argument. Miss Miller peered through the palm leaves and recognized Edna.

"Oh! dear," exclaimed she, breathlessly, "it's Edna, with that man Blake, whom I have such a dread for."

Lewis peeped and witnessed Edna kissing and embracing the man. He flushed with anger and gasped for breath.

Miss Miller clung to him. "If you love me, dear, be still."

"How can I? My poor, innocent friend! Who shall avenge him? Ah! my doubts are confirmed."

Presently Edna and the man repaired to the drawing room, and Lewis and Miss Miller lost sight of them.

Lewis was numb, and she observed tears in his large blue eyes.

"Darling boy, do not agitate yourself. I shall speak to Edna; she has always been a careless and thoughtless girl. Oh! it hurts me for both she and John. He seems to be so devoted to her."

"No, dear girl, this man will have to answer to me for his disgraceful conduct. The cur! I shall make him realize that he is worse than a dog."

Deceit, which is cunningly laid and unworthily carried on, under the guise of friendship, is, of all others, the most detestable. There can be no greater treachery than first to raise a confidence and then to deceive it. John had confidence in Edna, but she deceived him with her smooth words and gracious manners. Alas! the time will come when she will be defeated. She will fare the worse. She will have to suffer for it.

It is all in mad haste to stand well in the eyes of

the public. They are prone to assume or sacrifice any virtue by which they may accomplish their selfish ends.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

“He who excuses himself accuses himself.”

Every day gives us many lessons in life. Every feeling weaves a garment for the spirit. Every thought leaves its impression on the mind. Every passion plows a furrow in the soul. Therefore, it is our duty as moral beings so to guide and direct these feelings, thoughts and passions that they shall educate us in the right direction. Furthermore, what manner of education are we receiving? Is it in vice, folly, selfishness, deception or goodness and truth?

How sad for the vice of the age to substitute learning for wisdom, to educate the head and forget that there is a more important education necessary for the heart. Many lose their balance of mind and become wrecks because they are in want of heart culture. Is the head of more importance than the heart? Such, then, is the outline of the great problem, “happiness.” Remember, much of the happiness of life, both here and hereafter, depends on

how you meet its demands. You can, if you will it, grow apace in all that is manly or womanly in life, by neglecting the claims of your nature. Let the heart be opened, and a thousand virtues rush in. There is dew in one flower and not in another, because one opens its cup and takes it in, while the other closes itself and the drop runs off.

A fortnight after the grand ball, invitations were out for a reception to be given complimentary to Edna's guest, a young woman of her character. True it is that our character, habits and principles take their form and color from those of our intimate associates.

At the Boston Club, the club which Lewis loved to frequent because of its pleasing and elevating influence, and where he loved to linger and feel at home, he was conversing with a friend about the reception, when, presently and unceremoniously, a man joined them. Lewis immediately recognized him as the man who was with Edna in the conservatory at John's on the night of the ball.

The scene became vivid to his memory, and he quickly invited them to the reading room, wishing from the depths of his heart that his friend might decline and the other might accept. Luckily, it happened just as he wished it.

"Literature upon a country is well-nigh incalculable," spoke Lewis, pleasantly.

"Why, certainly," replied the other, "it molds the thoughts of a whole people. It is the soul of action, the only sensible articulate voice of the accomplished facts of the past. Its influence is very much like that of a companion to whom we are attached."

"Hence," interrupted Lewis, "it is of much consequence to know what class to avoid. I think we should choose our books, as well as our friends, for their sterling and intrinsic merit." At the same time Lewis opened a book entitled "The Hypocrite." "Have you ever read this book, Mr. Blake?"

Mr. Blake opened his eyes in wonder when he noticed the title.

"Why, no; but, really, I think I would like to read it. Is it really good?"

"Yes, indeed; it covers the whole nature of a hypocrite."

"Honestly," replied Mr. Blake, "a man cannot be justified in deceiving and misleading his friends."

"Still less," answered Lewis, "is he justified in trying to further his own passions and desires by breaking the trust placed in him. Nothing is more unjust or cowardly than that."

With a mocking smile, Blake replied: "Man is as

naturally set on ambition or passion as the bee is to gather honey."

"Yes," continued Lewis, "and in his mad haste he is heedless of the tide of evil which throbs in the soul, to his own condemnation and shame; and, though he may disguise the evil by artful words and a gracious bearing, still" (and Lewis stared at him with eyes of fire) "it is there, and the effect is as direful as though the expression was open and plain to all."

Mr. Blake fancied himself suspected by Lewis, and begged to be excused, as he had an appointment with a dear friend.

Lewis sprang before him and faced him boldly, saying: "Beware, beware, I say to you. You are playing a role of deception; and unless you cease, you will live to repent and to suffer. I know you, and my sole desire is to put a stop to your effronteries. Do you understand?"

Mr. Blake glanced at Lewis with a sneer and a grin of sangfroid, saying: "Why should you meddle in what in no way concerns you?"

"The reputations of my dearest friends are at stake, and it is my duty, as a gentleman, to defend them," replied Lewis.

"Au revoir," answered Mr. Blake, sneeringly, and

he quickly passed out, leaving Lewis alone with his thoughts.

Anger is the most impotent passion that accompanies the mind of man. What crimes have not been committed in paroxysms of anger? Has not a friend murdered a friend? The son massacred his parent? The creature blasphemed his Creator? Bear in mind, my dear readers, man was born to reason, to reflect, and to do all things quietly and in order. Consider, then, how much more you often suffer from your anger than from those things for which you are angry.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

“The last day has come, and the inevitable doom.”

Love and courtship should be to wedded love what a blossom is to the perfected fruit. The flower of this love must be measured, not by its intensity, but by its effects; by its beneficence in bringing into play a higher range of motives; by its skill in harmonizing different natures. Of nothing are people more ignorant than of human nature. Not once in a hundred times do two natures, brought side by side, harmonize in every part. Very rich and fruitful natures are often side by side with very barren ones; noble ones with those which are sordid. This is a consequence to be foreseen from the want of thought evinced by people when about to marry. Many counsel the young not to expect too much from love. That is an evil philosophy. Happiness in this life depends more upon the capacity of loving than of any other quality. If you lose all the treasures of love, it does not prove that the treasure is not to be found, but that you have not sought aright.

Lewis and his fiancée talked in whispers under the moonlight, seated on the rustic bridge which spanned the picturesque lake in the grounds surrounding the Miller estate. They were discussing the entrance to scenes of happiness and contentment. Ah! that sweet and dreamy threshold of unseen temples, where half the world has paused in couples, passed on, but never returned.

It becomes all young men and women who are standing where the radiant beams of love are beginning to gild the pathway before them to endeavor to ascertain whether the person he or she proposes to unite their destiny to is the one with whom they are best adapted to make the journey. If they are convinced that the choice is wise, then they may proceed with confidence to take upon themselves the privileges of the marriage relation. Then marriage will be a blessing, rather than a bitter curse, for an ill-mated human pair is the most woeful picture of wretchedness that is presented in the book of life; and yet, such pictures are plenty.

“Dearest, you shall name the day—the occasion of our greatest day—our wedding day. Won’t you?” questioned Lewis.

With love-light in her eyes, and a smile upon her lips, she answered:

"Yes, I shall name the day. Dearest, let it be the 25th of May, mother's birthday."

"Good," said he; "it shall be on that day."

Ah! how happy was this couple who had studied each other and realized that they had been made for each other; that God had willed it, and that true happiness was their aim in this wide and wonderful world.

A great deal has been said about unhappy marriages, but let us not forget that this union will be an exemplary one, because a judicious wife is constantly exerting an influence for good over the husband, and this was Miss Miller's aim, and her chief point was, and all candid persons will so readily admit this: that marriage speedily becomes a school for the exercise of virtue, and is the source of many of the best qualities in the life of man or woman.

Lewis left his fiancée doubly happy; his own heart was joyful because she had named their wedding day, joyful because she was the right sort of woman for his life partner, and he could expect naught but happiness with her.

On reaching home, his first impulse was to tell John of his good fortune, and how happy he was now that she had *named the day*. Every thought every action, seemed to be for her. How prosperous he had been! God, in His mercy, had provided for

him. He was delighted with his worthy claim. It was gained by diligent application.

The comfortable Morris chair on the veranda, under the sweet-scented wistaria, seemed to invite him to sit a while and think over his good luck. Accepting the invitation, he reclined and called upon memory to picture his successes, as well as his failures. Happiness is a mosaic composed of many small stones. Each, taken apart and viewed singly, may be of little value; but when all are grouped together, judiciously, and set, they form a design of priceless value, a blessing, a graceful whole, *a costly jewel*. After all, to be happy, you must determine to accept life cheerfully in whatever form it may come, and seek for good under all circumstances.

Gradually, his thoughts took flight and went back to the old Monastery, to the home of virtue, also his dear mother. How it all came back to him, not with a grudge, nor remorse, but with a feeling that made him sad in his happiness, because he missed them, both his mother and the Abbot. He felt as if something was wanting to complete his happiness. Still, in his heart, from the very depths, he also experienced a feeling of joy in the sadness of his memories. Nevertheless, he would hope for the best.

Human life has not a surer friend than hope. How

many would die did not hope sustain them! A strong mind always hopes, and always has cause to hope.

Suddenly he was startled from his reverie by a sharp noise, as of some one trying to turn a key in the door lock. He quietly leaned forward and recognized Mr. Blake, Edna's lover. He quickly stood up, to find the man gone. Tiptoeing to the door, he found it unlocked. Entering, he noiselessly locked it, and stood there in the hallway trying to solve the swift disappearance of the intruder.

How he wished for John to tell him, so that they could find out this scoundrel and vile creature. But he knew that John was out and would not come in until late. What must he do? Stay there and wait, or go after the cur? He was evidently in Edna's room, for the dim light in her room indicated that there was some one with her in secrecy.

As we watch the different vicissitudes of life, we are reminded of the frailty of human hopes and aspirations. As the leaves of a tree, once flourishing, once verdant, lose their vitality and finally waste away, so is it with our desires and anticipations. Be not dismayed at the trials of life; they are sent for our good. Life, all sunshine without shade, all happiness without sorrow, all pleasure without pain, were not life—at least, not human life. The severer trials of life call into exercise the latent faculties of

the soul of man. They are for the purposes of putting his manhood to the test. They may be hard to take, though they strengthen the soul. Tonics are always bitter. We must first learn to mourn and feel before we can know and think.

Lewis repaired to his room in dismay, sat on his bed with his face buried in his hands, trying to figure out the outcome of this treachery—and vice.

We should remember, when borne down by the sorrows and trials of life, that they are sent to us only for our instruction, even as we darken the cages of our birds when we wish them to sing.

Presently, a harsh laugh awakened him. He rushed to the door and listened. There he plainly heard Edna laugh—and he emerged from his room, walking lightly to John's room, adjoining Edna's. There he was, with the madness of a lion, ready to spring upon his prey.

A man of true feelings fires up naturally at baseness of any sort, even in cases where he may be under no obligation to speak out.

In his decision as to what step to take, he heard John entering into Edna's room. She and her gay admirer were too happy and joyful to hear his footsteps. Lewis made an attempt to go and stop him from entering, but too late — too late. John had opened the door and found them out. The surprise

was so intense, the revealment so strong, that, before he could think, he pulled out his revolver and fired, rushing on them. At the same time, Blake escaped into John's room, unharmed, and flew for his life. John, half-crazed, pursued him. In the meantime, Lewis had followed Blake in hot pursuit, but John, believing that Lewis was the man, fired again. Lewis walked toward John and fell wounded.

The servants of the mansion rushed to the scene and found Edna dead. The bullet had penetrated her skull. John, blind with rage, pounced upon Lewis, believing that he had killed the guilty man, when he discovered that it was Lewis, his friend.

Oh! God! Friendship, esteem, were swept away as if by a whirlwind, and this brief bit of anger had wrecked the home of happiness which years had been cementing.

Like a man crazed, his eyes blood-shot, his face death-stricken, John clutched Lewis around the throat, screaming: "Ah! you scoundrel! You whom I have befriended, sheltered; you had my trust, my confidence! What are you? Answer me! What are you?"

John's valet rushed to him, and tried to extricate him from his grasp. It was useless.

He cried out again—frantically—his whole form shaking in wild madness: "Let me kill him! Sure,

he is not dead. He betrayed me, and ruined my happiness, ruined my home, deceived me. Let me end it all."

The valet summoned the servants to assist him, and finally they loosened his grasp and held him back. Lewis, suffering, could not speak; his tongue was stiff, his teeth locked. Sad accidents and a state of affliction are schools of nature. Some natures are like grapes: the more they are trodden, the richer tribute they supply.

Who could have foreseen, just one hour ago, this household, known as the abode of merriment and laughter, would now be the home of sorrow and murder?

Just then a little voice was heard crying hysterically, "Mamma, where are you? Me can't sleep."

John rushed to the child, his hands clenched, his eyes glaring and seeing only foul motives. He roughly grasped the child's arm, shaking it violently, exclaiming in his excitement: "You call for your mamma! your mamma," and he laughed aloud. Yes, the laugh of treachery and contempt. He was now out of himself. His mind was full of revenge. He wanted to kill. What cared he? He was mad, mad, out of his senses completely. It was useless to argue with him now. His confidence had been betrayed. He



"Too Young to Understand."

would never again trust a human being. He hated everything—even himself, for being so foolish and blind to all these tricks played in his own household. Again he laughed at the little child. His own little Edna, scarcely past her third birthday; a perfect image of her mother, but like her father in disposition. She had been awakened by the shooting and screams of the servants, and slipped out of bed looking for her mother.

“There is your damned mother,” brutally pushing her over her mother’s lifeless body.

“I will kill you, too, and then blow my brains out. End it all. That’s what I’ll do,” and he paced the floor excitedly, moaning and laughing at random.

His valet tried to talk to him, but it only made matters worse. He would not listen to anything.

Little Edna had entwined her arms around her mother’s neck, and, with tears streaming down her plump rosy cheeks, lifted her little innocent face to her father and cried: “Me can’t wake her up. Daddy, mamma is dead. Me can’t wake her up. Come, daddy, let’s put mamma in bed.”

This rekindled his anger instead of touching his heart; the responsive chords of pity and love had turned to hate in all its strength. He only wanted to destroy everything that was once dear to him.

Turning upon his little child, he caught her by the

arms, and whispered meaningly: "I'm not your daddy. There he is," pointing to Lewis, as he lay on the floor.

Little Edna only stared at her father blankly, too young to understand.

John braced up again, and picked little Edna up, saying aloud: "I'll drown you in the river, then I'll jump in, too. Yes, God, if there is a God, I'll end it all to-night."

The valet, hearing this, screamed for help, and rushed to the telephone, but John pointed his revolver at him and said: "I'll kill you, too, if you touch that phone," and he jumped into his car and drove away to the river to carry out his threat.

The valet immediately called two of the men servants and Edna's maid, rushed to the garage, got into Edna's car and drove to the river where he supposed John was. On and on they sped until the wharf was reached. At a distance ahead of them they could plainly discern John. They could see him tearing up little Edna's night-gown and casting it away. They rushed on him, but he quickly covered them with his gun, warning them thus: "You damn fools, if you make one more step I'll shoot every one of you; hear me?"

He had removed his coat, and little Edna was standing near him, nude, shivering and crying. He

excitedly dropped his gun and raised her above his head in an effort to throw her into the deep waters of the river, when the servants rushed on him and held his arms, while the maid snatched little Edna from him.

He fought savagely, tried to extricate himself, but they held him and bound him fast with their belts. They rushed back into the car and speeded back to the mansion. John was placed in his library, with hands and feet strapped. The valet summoned Dr. Harris and asked him to quiet John until he would regain his senses; also begged him not to let any one find out about the terribly tragic affair. Everything was kept a secret. No one was to get wind of this terrible crime, owing to the prominence of John and Lewis.

Dr. Harris promised to be silent on the subject. He also administered to Lewis, assuring the servants that he was seriously wounded, but there was fair chance of his recovery.

"In the assurance of strength there is strength. Men often conquer difficulties, because they think they can. Their confidence in themselves inspires confidence in others. Such men are possessed of manly character and wisdom."

All difficulties come to us, like the lion which met Samson; the first time we encounter them they roar

and gnash their teeth, but once subdued we find a nest of honey in them.

It is an old saying, "He who has lost confidence can lose nothing more."

Lewis relied upon the good name he had made by his own exertions, and knew that his best friend, in this hour of trial, was governed by unconquerable determination of spirit united with decision of character. He knew that Heaven would help him. He would be prudent, would know when to speak and when to be silent. When you have need of a needle you move your finger with a wise caution; use the same prudence with the inevitable affairs of life; give attention, and keep yourself from undue precipitation, otherwise the world will treat you badly.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

“I shot an arrow in the air;
It fell on earth, I know not where.
I breathed a song into the air;
It fell on earth, I know not where.
Long, long afterwards, in an oak,
I found the arrow, still unbroke,
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.”

(Longfellow.

Lewis, in a critical condition, was confined in the hospital, but the attending surgeon said there was hope. He was silent; not a word could be gotten from him with regard to the tragedy. The physician had forbidden any interview.

John had disappeared. No one knew of his whereabouts. It was rumored that he had gone to the wharf during the night and jumped into the river. In reality, no one really knew what had become of him.

But, no, John had not committed suicide, as was

suspected by everyone; he had left the city and was trying to go far away—seeking peace of mind and heart.

What was he now? A voice from his soul persistently answered: "A murderer!" What was life to him, now? All that he loved had been destroyed. His heart bled. His head seemed as if it were bursting; his whole body was sick. "Oh, God!" he would cry, blankly. His mind was wandering and he did not possess any more courage and strength to brace up and overcome this downfall. He had left home with a curse on his lips and had abandoned everything. He would never enter that house again. His whole fortune was forgotten. Of what good was it to him now? Could gold buy happiness? Would riches bring back contentment?

The spirit of discouragement and discontent is very unfortunate, wicked as well as weak; it is paralyzing and destructive.

Ah! his was a wretched lot—truly miserable. Would he live only to lament and repine?

Gradually he drifted into despondency. Deeper and stronger did it grow, until he was given up to it. No more pride—a mere drunkard, a frequenter of dives and slums. Drink—drink—drink! The stronger it was the more he seemed to relish it. On and on he traveled, going somewhere, trying to forget.

Though he may wander the wide world over, gather wealth and fame, they will be found impotent to confer happiness, and life to him will seem full of disappointments; but it is so simply because he failed to seek happiness in that spirit of quiet content which alone conducts us to its portals.

He had failed. He had worked hard and felt alive and patient—always hoping for the best. Now, he was dead to the world. He could never trust another man or woman. He could aspire no more. The blow had made him a mere child, helpless.

He was too weak to rise superior to ill fortune. He could only deplore his lot, and sank deeper and deeper into despondency, until time alone would tell the end.

“Time is the rider that breaks youth.” How bright the world appeared—how full of novelty, enjoyment and pleasure it had all looked to John in the days of his youth. But as years passed on he found it to abound in sorrowful scenes. Happy they who can pass through such trials with cheerfulness and stand erect beneath the heaviest burdens. He could not endure it. He would never forget it. Those days of anguish! And no one to sympathize with him.

His brain was full of imaginings. He was giving up to despair. The awful calamity had produced a paralysis of his mind. His mental power was frozen

with indifference; his heart had become ossified with melancholy; his soul was shrouded in a cloud of gloom. No words of consolation, no cheerful repartee could break the deathlike feeling. No love could warm the pent-up heart.

Little Edna was unaware of the meaning of the disturbance which had taken place in her father's house. Poor little soul, she was too young to know. She only asked for him now and then, inquiring of Miss Miller, who had taken her in charge: "Where is my papa? He was mean to me last night. What did he do with my mamma? Is my poor mamma dead? I heard Dick say so" (referring to John's valet). "I want my daddy and my mamma," her lips trembling and her eyes filled with tears. "Why did daddy want to throw me in the river? I was cold when he took my gown off. I told him so, but he said: 'Shut up, I say.'"

"Daddy is good to me. I love my daddy. Where is he? I want him."

Miss Miller could not answer this little unfortunate and forsaken child. Her own heart was heavy, and words choked her. She merely pressed little Edna to her bosom and kissed her tenderly.

It would seem fitting that nature should exempt little children from such trials. Miss Miller only meditated on the present state of affairs. She vowed

upon her soul that she would train little Edna in such a manner as to enable her to expect and look to the only true source for aid and assistance for the trials that were in store for her.

How fleeting is the happy and innocent guilelessness of childhood! The years as they come bring with them intelligence and experience, but they take with them, in their resistless course, the innocent pleasures of childhood's years.

That night, as Miss Miller caressed her, and heard her prayers, little Edna thoughtfully said: "I will pray to the little infant Jesus to please bring back my mamma to me. I miss her so much," and, continuing, she recited in her sweet childish voice, "Little Jesus, won't you bring back my mamma? Daddy was mean to her, but he will be sorry. I'm all alone now—I don't know where my daddy is. But, little Jesus, I'm a good little girl, and I love you, so please don't forget. You will find mamma with the angels, 'cause Miss Miller told me so. She says mamma is watching over me. Tell her that I'm so lonesome and want to kiss her good-night." Pondering a while, she recited again: "Oh! I forgot—tell my mamma that daddy wanted to drown me in the big river last night, and I was so scared. Don't forget, now.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

“If we could only forget.”

“Well, how is my patient this morning?” inquired the doctor of Lewis.

“Doctor, I feel less pain; I feel that I shall recover.”

“Yes, yes. You will soon be able to go about.” Suddenly changing the tone of his voice he continued: “By the way, that little lady friend of yours is quite a brilliant little woman. She is a capable nurse. She proved to be quite efficient. Your speedy recovery is greatly due to her attention and careful nursing.”

“Yes, doctor, she is a very dear friend of mine. It certainly pleases me to hear you speak well of her.”

“Well,” said the doctor, “you will soon be able to leave the hospital, and I would suggest that you sojourn out West for several months. You need rest, you are in danger of having a nervous break-down.”

“Yes, doctor, I shall follow your advice. I expect to go to California.”

Just then the door of the room opened noiselessly and Miss Miller entered with her mother and little Edna.

"Good afternoon," said she, as she pressed his hand tightly.

"How is our patient?" asked Mrs. Miller of the doctor. Little Edna busied herself with her doll, which Miss Miller had just purchased for her.

Lewis' face brightened as he spoke softly: "I feel better. Dearest," he addressed Miss Miller, "Dr. Harris wants me to go West for several months." Noticing the anxious countenance of his fiancée he gently continued: "And, dearest, you must come with me. We shall be married as soon as I'm able to leave the hospital. Oh! God, I feel happy at the thought of such bliss. But, dearest, think of the wretchedness of my dear friend John. God only knows what will become of him. If I were only able to find him and comfort him. Poor old pal."

"Do not agitate yourself, my darling," said she. Everything will end well. Only be patient and trust in God. He, in his almightiness, will soften all these trials."

"Poor little Edna," observing her near his bed. "Poor little innocent child. You will live with us. We will love you, and never let you know the agony that we are undergoing for your mother's sin."

"Hush, compose yourself," said Miss Miller. "Let us forgive and forget, for the present. Look at these beautiful roses I brought you," pointing at a vase on the table nearby filled with American Beauties.

"Thank you, sweetheart. You are so kind and thoughtful."

Two weeks afterwards they were quietly married, and, everything being ready for the trip, they left immediately for California.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

"Many years have passed and brought many changes."

"Darling, do you not think it best for us to inquire into Edna's intimacy with Harold Lansing? He seems so devoted to her, and she also seems to be quite attached to him," asked Helen of her husband, Lewis, who was comfortably reclining in his Morris chair.

"Yes, dear wife, it is fair to both of them."

"Edna is now eighteen years old. Praise and thanks to God for helping us rear her in truth and virtue. She is a woman of true intelligence, admired in her circle of friends and high society."

"Yes," continued Lewis, "there is a beautiful harmony about her character that at once inspires the respect which soon warms into love. Her moral worth holds man in some restraint, and prevents him from becoming inhumanly corrupt."

"Very well said, my dear husband. Now, I shall re-

pair to the drawing-room and you join us there. Then Edna and I will go out into the garden, while you broach the subject to Harold."

"My dear boy, we all scorn busybodies, who are constantly meddling in what in no way concerns them, when they hasten to lay before others the fruits of their investigations and so, at length, the happiness of some home circle is destroyed by the malicious poison-giving officiousness of busybodies. Now listen attentively to me, Harold. I have the greatest regard for you. You are an exemplary young man, and I feel proud to have you call on Edna; consequently, I venture to make inquiries with this explanation that parents or guardians should be judicious. I wish to ask you to reply to me thoughtfully and confidently. Do you love Edna with a pure, unselfish and discreet affection? Are you thoroughly assured that you are fully prepared to enter into matrimony? Let me read this little poem to you." Opening the book that he held in his hands Lewis read slowly:

" 'Life without love—oh! it would be
A world without a sun;
Cold as the snow-capped mountain, dark
As myriad nights in one;
A barren scene, without one spot

Amid the waste,
Without one blossom of delight,
Of feeling or of taste.' ”

He then folded the book and looked deeply into Harold's face, all radiant and bespeaking joy and honesty.

“Mr. Ferry, I am really sorry, and feel ashamed of myself, for being so negligent as not to have spoken to you ere this about my engagement to Edna, the queen among women. I love her with a love that cannot be measured, and her love for me has strengthened me and ennobled my character. It has given me higher motives and a nobler aim to every action of my life. I love her truly and devotedly; she has promised to marry me and, with your sanction and Mrs. Ferry's approval, we shall name the day in the near future.”

“Harold, you have spoken manfully, and I shall suggest that you deliberate on this important subject a while longer, and then we will announce your engagement.”

“I thank you, Mr. Ferry, for your kindly interest in our happiness, and I assure you again that I will devote my life to making Edna happy.”

Presently Edna and her foster-mother entered the room, and their presence terminated the discussion.

Dear fathers and mothers, when you read this do not let it escape your memory, that very much of the unhappiness in this world is due to your carelessness and lack of interest in your son's or daughter's love affairs. Now, do not get the wrong impression; I mean that you should help them to discriminate and make the proper investigation as to the character and disposition of their life partner before they are to be married, as this is not for a month or a year, but for life. Do not advocate divorce. A well-constituted man or woman cannot leave one wedded love for another. He or she will never be happy.

Can a man or woman be happy to look back on days spent with their divorced love, whether they be days of joy or anguish? The man or woman who will tell you that he or she is happy divorced and married to another is speaking merely from the lips. They are not happy, because the heart of a divorced man or woman is full of feelings that cannot be forgotten. Only death can put assunder what God hath joined together. Is the human heart to be trampled upon and broken, and then mended and made happier?

No; no one can heal the wound in the heart made by the indiscretion and cruelty of another. There will always come a time in your hour of meditation when memory will recall to you the days misspent,

and you are bound to experience a sad pleasure in recalling days of sadness—hence, you cannot be happy by marrying again while your first love lives. Therefore, I say to you again that a young girl or man who loves to look back upon the direction and counsel of a wise father and a faithful mother will seldom do an unworthy or unjust act. The remembrance of a happy home is theirs—a home of purity, of a father's and mother's upright example and undying love, there will rarely be found reasons or causes for divorce.

A good woman, who respects herself, will have a set purpose in life—some supreme aim, grand in its character. She should, in the first place, know what she is, what influence is to go out from her, what duties are resting upon her. When she has considered these things, she should then form the high purpose of being a true woman. She should be a devout worshiper and a true Christian. Let her love truth and virtue instead of fashionable vices and folly. A good man should respect himself, also. He should never glory in that which is common to a beast; nor that which is common to a fool; nor that which is common to a wicked man.

Remember, it is thinking, not growth, that makes perfect manhood or womanhood.

Do not be too prone to take beauty and words in

lieu of actions. Do not be impressed with good clothes and a fine figure before you inquire into the character of the individual.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

"In the reproof of chance lies the true proof of men."

Fifteen years gone by, and not the slightest information about John. It was now generally supposed that he was dead.

Although Lewis had made thorough searches and inquiries, not one trace was found. His whole fortune had been taken over by Lewis, who had carefully guarded it, and was making the necessary and lawful arrangements to have it transferred to Edna before her wedding day.

Lewis was a different man. The terrible calamity of years ago had constantly worked heavily on his mind. He could not understand why John had not listened to him. Why was he to undergo this unhappiness?

Dark and full of disappointments had been John's lot, but he was unable to fathom the reasons for them. If he could only have brought himself to see

that they were for his own good, that he needed this chastening influence. No, he had invited defeat by giving way to disappointment. It is, therefore, the better philosophy to take things calmly and endeavor to be content with your lot.

Though we may wander the world over and gather wealth and fame, they will be found impotent to confer happiness.

Yes, fifteen years, then Time, the great consoler of the world, was healing John's sorrows and making the trials seem way in the distance. Far away, in Mexico, he had found solace. Though broken-hearted through the years, and bent in grief and agony, he had prospered and amassed a large fortune in oil fields.

The days of anguish and illness and nights of desolation had whitened his hair, which was once jet black. His face had the lines of one who was suffering intensely. His disposition was now stern and severe; he was money-mad. He loved the almighty dollar, and trusted no one. He had forgotten his God. His investments had brought him millions, and now what was he to do with it?

He was living under the assumed name of Carlos Rodriguize, and had tried in every way to lose his identity.

As he examined his morning mail he happened to see a bundle of newspapers addressed to him from New Orleans. Merely through curiosity he opened the bundle and glanced at the title pages. There, in big black letters, was printed: "Red Cross Drive a Big Success, Through the Effort of Mr. Lewis Ferry, Chairman, and his Protegee, Miss Edna Russell, and Harold Lansing, to Whom She Is Engaged to Be Married in May."

His heart suddenly felt numb, and his head ached with pain. His whole system was affected, and he felt the influence of memory, remorse, sacrifice. This sudden change was inexplicable; he could not think of anything else but this sacrifice, the revival of lost feelings. Something seemed to whisper: "You are wrong. Repent, and you will be happy. Forgive and be forgiven." He drifted into lonesomeness; he needed sympathy and love. He would roam about the oil fields and plains, would go up the mountains and watch the red glowing sun sink in the West. Oh! God, how miserable it was. He remembered so clearly how he had enjoyed going home to seek his loved ones, how he loved to caress his own little baby girl. Though his wife and best friend had deceived him, was the little child to blame? Everything imaginable presented itself and made him regret.

He longed for the kisses and tenderness of his little

girl. He could picture her before him, teasing him and making him forget his cares and trials. Again and again he would mumble, "The sacrifice, my darling little girl." His head bent forward and he gave vent to sobs, and tears glistened in his longing eyes. He knelt there on the mountain side and, reaching for his pocketbook, opened it nervously, casting to the winds in every direction to currency and gold that it contained, and kept the little "souvenir" miniature crucifix, which Lewis had given him on his wedding day, raised it heavenward and cried: "Oh! my God."

"The Sacrifice. Forgive me, oh! Lord, and give me strength to forgive. It is killing me, God. I can resist no longer. I'm unhappy with all this gold and wealth. Take it all, destroy it, but give me peace of mind. I have been cruel and have sinned shamefully. I am sorry for my crimes, and wish to expiate my sins, with a firm resolution to sin no more. Help me, Lord, to go back to my child, and find comfort, sympathy and love. Only you, my God, knows what I have suffered."

Regret, if deep and constant, becomes remorse, which settles over the heart with a crushing weight, driving far away all hope, unless, indeed, the Angel of Forgiveness brings consolation to the soul.

There are many walking this earth whose lives are

shadowed by some great sorrow to which is added the pain of regret, caused by their own heedless and inconsiderate actions. Hasty marriages cause such vain repining and regret. The happiness of life is gone; the hopes of a home, endearing companionship, are fled, because a hasty and inconsiderate action was taken where care and study were required. O! that the young would give heed to the warning voice of experience, and thus escape the vain regrets of later years!

Yes, memory, we are sometimes stricken by it, and old reflections rush back to us as vividly as in time when they were our daily talk. We think of faces, and they return to us as plainly as when their presence gladdened our eyes, and their voices thrilled in our ears.

With John, it was an affection that apparently came to an end, and had dropped out of his life, but had only been dormant. It was a sudden revival of old feelings and thoughts.

He disposed of his oil holdings and stocks; sold everything, which aggregated to a large sum. He was a millionaire now, and was going back home to seek happiness.

When he reached New Orleans, he felt like one in a dream; everything seemed so strange to him. He had not kept up with the fashions of the day, consequent-

ly he engaged a valet and arranged for apartments at the most fashionable hotel in the city. With his hair white, and the long whiskers he had grown, he was disguised completely. He was now Senor Carlos Rodriguize, a millionaire from Mexico City.

He made quite a stir in the social world; the elite of the city considered it a slight not to have him honor them with his presence.

Three weeks before Edna's wedding day Lewis and his wife gave a reception to a selected number of friends in honor of their "beloved protegee," as they termed it. Without fail Senor Carlos Rodriguize was numbered among the honored guests.

In his private room John was silent and grave. Oh! 'twas hard to face it all, in the home of one who had robbed him of his own happiness; to play the part of a stranger to his own child. Why, oh! God, was it so? Nevertheless, he had to brace up and meet the situation, bear the consequences.

We are all short-sighted and fail to see the end of things. A great deal of the misery of life comes from this disposition to have things our own way, as though we could not be happy under any circumstances except those we have formed to meet our own wants. The disposition to make the best of life is what we need to make us happy. Again, happiness is a mosaic composed of many small stones—each,

taken apart and viewed singly, may be of little value; but when grouped and combined carefully and set, they form a pleasing whole, a costly jewel.

At the appointed hour John was ready and looking his best. The distinguished millionaire from Mexico City departed from the hotel in his own private car for the Millers' palatial home, the abode where he had often spent delightful and joyful hours. He had purchased a wedding gift for the bride, and words are inadequate to describe its magnificence. It is useless to say that he had not spared expense. It had to be costly—made to order, and exquisite in every detail—a rope of pearls, and a gold cross studded with diamonds hung from it.

The Miller home was superb, elegant beyond compare. When he entered the garden, strange to say, he felt at home. His heart grew more vigorous; he braced up and walked proudly to the house. The guests had all arrived, and he was announced to the assemblage in a courteous and stately manner. "The Honorable Senor Carlos Rodriguize, from Mexico City." He entered the drawing-room and bowed. Every one rose to do him honor. Lewis and his wife presented him to Edna. He took her hand and pressed it tightly, feeling unable to loosen his grasp. The face, the perfect image of his murdered wife. Everything reminded him of her. The eyes, the

mouth, the figure. Oh! God, how unjust it was for him to stand there, silent and unable to tell how it all would terminate. How he longed to open his heart, embrace his child, and confess. Tell everything—how he had suffered, and was still in agony. But he had to wait. He could not plunge in—jump at conclusions, mar his daughter's happiness through his own hasty actions.

He very gracefully handed Edna the golden case, which he took from his pocket, saying: "Wishing you every success in your married life, Miss Russell."

She stood speechless, smiled radiantly and opened the case.

"Magnificent! Gorgeous!" were the exclamations, as she held it up and showed it to her guests. Everyone was amazed. Words of praise and exclamations of joy were uttered in unison. A rope of oriental pearls, with a cross studded with diamonds.

Harold, surprised and overjoyed, shook hands with the Senor, and expressed his deepest thanks for this generosity and mark of respect for his bride-to-be.

Lewis' wife immediately fastened the pearls around Edna's neck, while all repeated their admiration of them.

Lewis invited John into the garden for a smoke, and they strolled along until they reached the fountain where, so many years ago, they had stood and

admired the little fishes playing gleefully with the bubbles on the water.

Memory again recalled it to John. How it all came back! There he stood, face to face with the man who had ruined his life.

Gradually they drifted into serious conversation about Edna and her wedding.

John expressed his admiration of her, saying: "She seems so young and innocent, and I feel sure that she is happy. Her finance seems to be a perfect gentleman. I shall venture to say that the couple will be very happy together."

"Yes," answered Lewis, "undoubtedly. The match is the culmination of long and esteemed friendship. Their love for each other is bound to be lasting," and he stopped, hung his head in thought, thinking silently of the ill-matched marriage of his beloved friend of years ago.

John stared at Lewis in silence, biting his lips in pain. The revengeful feeling rose once more in his heart, and he was prompted to grasp him by the throat and tell him that he was John, the man whom he had villainously deceived. But no, not yet. The voice of conscience seemed to warn him.

"Pardon me, Mr. Ferry," said John. "You have been so lucky to receive the honor of rearing Miss Russell. I trust you will not think me inquisitive?"

But I know a Mr. John Russell in Mexico. He was a peculiar sort of a fellow. I made his acquaintance in a rather disagreeable manner. I was out in the oil fields one day, when I was accosted by him. He was apparently under the influence of liquor. He came up in a very abrupt and ungentlemanly way, calling out to me: 'Look here, who are you? All dressed up like you owned these wells. I'm Mr. Russell, and demand your identity!' I politely informed him that I was the owner of the fields, and asked him to be seated near me on a rock."

"Is that so," surprisedly uttered Lewis. His eyes opened wide in astonishment. He quietly asked: "Senor, did he ever tell you about his life?"

"Yes," answered the Senor. "He certainly did, and I shall never forget it. It was too pitiful."

Just then Lewis' wife appeared on the scene, and asked them to join the guests at luncheon.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick.”

The following day Lewis was restless and anxious. He could not wait, but wrote to the Senor and asked him for an interview. His anxiety was unbearable. He wanted to know whether or not John was living, and where, so that he could go to him, tell him everything, bring him back and make a new start in life for him and with them.

Senor was delighted to have him call, and named the hour for 9 o'clock in the evening.

As the hall clock struck 9 Lewis was ushered into the private room of the Senor, and was told that he would be in presently. Lewis scrutinized the room and surroundings. He walked to the table and there caught sight of a little gold crucifix lying on a book entitled “Revenge.” He almost fell to the floor as he recognized the one and same little crucifix that he had given John on his wedding day.

Presently the Senor appeared on the threshold, bowing and smiling pleasantly.

Lewis, in his nervousness and embarrassment, caught the Senor's hands and shook them nervously.

"Be seated, Mr. Ferry, I am glad you came," spoke the Senor.

"Yes, thank you, Senor. I, too, am glad I came. Senor," excitedly asked Lewis, "pardon me, but where did you get this little crucifix?" Rising from his seat and going to the table he picked it up and held it in his hands. His face was pale, and his lips quivered.

The Senor stood speechless for several seconds, and then flushed with anger. He could resist it no longer. His whole body revolted, and, breaking the silence, he spoke furiously:

"Lewis Ferry, you scoundrel, you who robbed me of everything—love, honor and faith. You stand there before me, shaking like a criminal. Do you know me now?" suddenly advancing on Lewis with clenched fists. "Look into my eyes and see the agony, the pain you have caused me."

Lewis, unable to move, his faculties having left him, felt sick and miserable. He could not speak.

John pulled out the drawer of the table and took out a revolver.

Lewis saw him and, by the help of Providence, he

suddenly recognized his strength and, standing erect, spoke in a masterful and convincing voice:

“John Russell, you whom I once called ‘friend,’ you called me out into this world, and tried to make a criminal, a fool out of me. But, remember, you are mistaken. Listen to me—” Just then John elevated his gun to shoot.

Lewis jumped upon him, knocking the gun from his hand. They scuffled, and Lewis struck him in the face, which caused John to fall on his knees, and he finally sank to the floor, still cursing and abusing Lewis.

“God only knows what I have suffered,” spoke Lewis, broken-heartedly, “all through your carelessness, heedlessness and inconsiderate actions. You, who would not listen to reason and truth. You never tried to obey your conscience, but only fed on vice, folly and passion.” Going to John, whose face was bleeding, he spoke again: “Now, you have to listen to me.

“The night of the murderous act I was sitting on your veranda when I saw a man enter your home. I followed him and heard him in your wife’s room. I felt for you; it hurt me deeply, because I loved you as a brother. I went to my room with the intention of waiting for you, so as to catch this man and make

him pay the penalty, but you came in hurriedly, and, before I could stop you, it was too late; you fired."

John tried to rise, and Lewis assisted him to the chair, and told him: "Here, here is the proof," pulling from his pocket the dying statement of Blake. "He was the man. He was the one who caused all this cruel and indescribable calamity. Read, read it all," and he gave John the sheet of paper.

John weakly grasped the paper and read in his anguish.

"Now, John, see what you have brought down upon all of us," said Lewis, his face full of sympathy, and tears rolling down his cheeks. "Your own little girl, Edna—remember, she is your child—she has asked and called for you many times. Her mother, also, was always before her. She told my loving wife that her mother was continually calling her."

John aroused himself at the word "child" and, raising his head, gazed at Lewis and cried childishly.

Lewis stooped over him and clasped his hand, saying: "John, you have changed beyond recognition. Yes, you are different now."

"Yes," he managed to answer, "I have changed. God knows I am a different man."

"Now, listen to me again, John. I still love you. I still cherish the fondest feelings for you. If you only knew what I have suffered because you were gone.

We tried in every conceivable way to locate you, but everyone said you were dead. My wife and I reared little Edna in the love and fear of our God. She lives to be an exception. We love her as our very own. She, in return, has always displayed the fondest affection for us, and always showed true signs of a perfect and Christian lady."

"Lewis, I am sorry, answered John, crying. "So sorry that it cuts me and makes me feel like dying. Would that I had died rather than live this woeful, empty life. I have failed, all chances are lost, opportunities wasted, love ill-chosen. There is nothing left. I have reached the end. My poor heart is bleeding to death. Lewis, my only friend, I have wronged you. Forgive me. Forgive me."

"John, dear old friend, take heart again, and be courageous. Confront difficulties with unflinching perseverance. No one can tell who the heroes are, and who the cowards, until some crisis comes to put us to the test. To struggle and again and again to renew the conflict, this is life's inheritance. Be yourself again. Exercise your own powers, think your own thoughts, and speak your own sentiments. Form your own opinions and your own convictions to the will of God. He, our Redeemer, will take care of the consequence. Let your conscience speak, for it will set you on your feet again, and your will will hold

you upright. Conscience is the moral governor of the heart, and only through its dominating influence can a noble character be fully developed."

"Lewis, I have been blind and foolish beyond recall," answered John. "I have failed in my attempts to secure happiness, peace of mind and contentment. Oh! my Lord, life, life eternal, I need courage; yes, I need you Lewis, my old and tried friend. I have been cruel to you, and I feel broken in spirit, down-trodden. My life has been misspent. Now death will claim me. Still, I'm not fit, not prepared to face my God. The time is short, for I feel the pangs of death's penalties. The winds of misfortune and sorrow have swept over my soul and scattered the blossoms of hope. I am lost"—crying bitterly.

"John, do not give way like this. Take it upon yourself as a duty to repent and be better. The flowers of hope may be gone, but think of the fruits of long suffering: 'Patience, faith and love.' Thus the darkest clouds which overhang your life now may appear the brightest to the angels who behold them with prophetic ken from Heaven."

"Oh! Lewis, you know that sorrow has killed many, and I am a victim."

"No, a thousand times no, you will not die. You must not entertain such feelings. I admit that your heart has been powerfully stricken by this cruel

blow, nevertheless it is wrong to sit down, fold your hands and mournfully feed upon grief and tears. Brace up, seek truth and righteousness, then you will gradually realize that life was lent for noble deeds. You still have a mission to fulfill. Come, now, awake from your meditations. Get ready, and I'll return to-morrow with Edna. She must know all. It will please her to find her own dear father. She is fully capable to sustain the surprise and unexpected blow."

"Oh! Lewis, shall she know the truth?"

"The truth, always," answered Lewis. "We shall carefully relate it all to her. Harold, also, must be present. He must know everything, so as to be able to help and encourage his wife, when she'll feel sad and downhearted. If he loves her it will test him. He will sympathize with her in these hours of sorrow and pain. Sad accidents and a state of affliction are a school of virtue. It corrects levity. Adversity is the touchstone of character. Grief is a common bond that unites hearts. It can knit hearts closer than happiness can. There beats not a heart but has felt the force of affliction. There is not an eye but has witnessed many scenes of sorrow."

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

“How uncertain is human life! There is but a breath of air and the beat of a heart betwixt this world and the next.”

The painful and awful suspense made John powerless. The faint pulsation of his broken heart made him weaker and weaker.

Lewis had made arrangements for Edna and Harold to meet the Senor in his private room at 10 o'clock the following morning.

John had lost all energy; his strength to overcome the present difficulties failed him. He tried to walk, but his limbs weakened. Finally he managed to get to the table, sat in his chair and slowly picked up the pen and scribbled a farewell message to his daughter and friends. Then he tried to rise and go to his couch, but the effort strained him, and he fell over the table—dead.

Death quickens recollections painfully. Some of the saddest experiences in life come without premo-

dition. Yesterday life went well; hope was in the ascendant; it was easy to be content. To-day, all is reversed. The crushed heart can scarcely lift itself to pray; speech seems paralyzed.

Lewis, Edna and Harold were admitted to John's apartments, and ushered into his private room. Edna stepped in first. She was so eager to know the intentions of the Senor in requesting this interview, and was at a loss to fathom the motives. Harold followed her, and Lewis came in last.

The valet rushed to the table and caught John in his arms; he lifted him up and uttered a cry of fear and terror. "Yes, sir, he is dead."

Lewis quickly assisted him to rest the body on a couch, while Edna screamed excitedly, grasping Harold's arm tightly.

The valet soon discovered the note lying upon the table and handed it Lewis. Lewis read the note and handed it to Edna, saying: "Darling little girl read this and do not falter. It is God's will."

Edna opened her eyes in wonder and astonishment. She slowly accepted the letter and stared at the writing.

"My Darling Little Girl—Death is claiming me. I cannot live it out. Oh! God only knows I am sorry. It is too late. Pray for me, dear child. Forgive the

injury I have done you. Some day, perhaps, we shall meet again in the beautiful abode of our Lord. Darling, pray for your mother, also; she sinned shamefully. Pray, pray for our deliverance, dear child. Good-by. May God bless you. Farewell, dear friends. JOHN."

Edna read the letter with strained eyes, and stood speechless. Lewis and Harold stared at her. Suddenly she came forward to embrace Lewis, her foster-father, when he caught her, as she had swooned.

When God sees fit to afflict, the body and the soul may be plunged into sorrow's dungeon, still are there not some happy phases to life's weary pilgrimage? To bear the ills of life patiently is one of the noblest virtues, and one which requires as vigorous an exercise of the will as to resent the encroachment of wrong.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

She left her home, her wealth, her amusements, her companions, her lover, all for God."

Edna, Harold, Lewis and his wife had assembled in the library, at the request of Lewis, for the purpose of explaining the entire mystery to Edna. Edna was laboring under a lamentable delusion. Her face, once radiant with perpetual smiles, now showed signs of extreme grief and perplexity. She had changed surprisingly.

Harold sat by her on the davenport, and placed his arm about her affectionately.

Lewis seated himself in his Morris chair, and beckoned his wife to sit on the arm of his chair. There in a group they lingered and lent attentive ears to the tale of woe and bitter suffering of Edna's parents.

Lewis never faltered in his detailed talk. He defined and illustrated every point, from the old Her-

mit's tale to the courtship of John and Edna—then the tragedy.

Tears filled his eyes as he spoke, and his wife would dry them with her kerchief, saying: "Dearest, you have said enough. Compose yourself and trust in God."

Edna, lamenting, broken-hearted to the core, buried her face in her hands.

Silence reigned in the room for several seconds, when Harold spoke discouragingly: "It seems cruel that such a calamity should be permitted, when we might have been so happy. Was there not some way by which it could have been avoided? Or at least wait a while?"

Lewis instantly fixed his eyes on him, wondering what the intent of this assertion meant.

Edna impulsively extricated herself from his embrace, and faced him boldly, saying: "What do you mean? Am I to infer that you are dissatisfied with my lineage, my ancestors, my misfortune, my future?" Finally, giving vent to unrestrained sobs and tears: "Yes, my heart is crushed. My whole life is blighted. Oh! God, have mercy on me; help me to bear it all," and she knelt in their presence, folded her hands in prayer, closed her eyes, with the tears streaming down her cheeks, and continued: "God, in His mercy, will not forsake me. I am going to bear it.

Yes, I'll heed my father's dying request—to pray, pray, for their deliverance. To-morrow I shall enter a convent, and remain there to the end of my days. Yes, a good woman's prayer will, from the deepest dungeon, climb Heaven's height and give a blessing." Rising from the floor, she again faced Harold, and spoke convincingly:

"Remember, young man, when you are surrounded by friends and the comforts of life there might come a time when the storm of life may blow upon you, then you will remember me, and see how necessary to us is a faith in God's word and promises."

Harold sprung to his feet excitedly and clasped Edna's hands, imploring her to defer her decision. "No, you must not, Edna dear. Think of me, your promised and devoted husband. Dearest, I never meant a word of it. You misunderstand, you accuse me wrongfully. Forgive, dear, and I promise you that nothing will ever be mentioned about this affair again. Come," and he tried to fondle her, but she resisted and spoke thus:

"Harold, dear boy, I am not the same woman I was yesterday. As I said, my heart is crushed; I cannot marry you and be happy; I cannot lead a life of 'make-believe.' It is best, dear, that we part forever. You will soon learn to love another. I must make a sacrifice for my unfortunate parents. They were

weak. I must be strong. It is so hard, under the circumstances, for me to say that it is 'all for the best,' " and she wept silently.

Lewis, unable to understand this outburst, tried to reconcile Edna. "Listen, dear little girl, you are full of sorrow just now. Do not be unkind through your afflictions. You need thought and consideration. Wait a while before you form your resolution. Remember, no creature would be more unhappy than a man or woman who had never known affliction. The best need sorrow for the trial of their virtue. You have promised to wed Harold. Now, deliberate on this important topic, and make your decision later. Let your heart dictate. Choose between wedded life or renounce the world and follow Christ, the Son of God."

Harold felt downtrodden, and walked away. When he reached the doorway he stopped, looked back, extended his arms to Edna, who had thrown herself over the pillows on the davenport. He called out to her, saying: "Darling, will you let me go? Are you sending me away? Think, love, how cruel this is."

But Edna never stirred; she was thinking deeply and conscientiously.

It has been said that life commences when the mind learns to meditate upon its nature, its powers and its possibilities. Yes, the commencement of true

soul-growth. To live without thought is not life; it is simple, barren existence.

Edna weighed everything slowly and carefully. She could not induce herself to face the world again with this weight of sorrow constantly on her mind. Could she dispel it? No, no! It was impossible. Could she erase the remembrance? But, no; with a relative justice, memory summons us to review our trials and tribulations.

There are dark hours that mark the history of the brightest years. Though there are the dark ones, when the fire will neither burn on our hearths nor in our hearts, and all without and within is dismal, there come days when we rejoice in the brightness of hope and prosperity.

She now firmly resolved to devote her time to charity, and enter the Convent of the Sacred Heart. It was not to be her lot to participate in the delights and pleasures of a "union of hearts."

Fate had consigned her to solitude and celibacy. She gradually consoled herself with the assurance that there are advantages in being alone. "God has given me existence, and I choose a life of sacrifice and prayer."

The following day she visited her mother's grave in company with her foster-father and mother. To evade scandal, and keep the secret, they had interred

her mother in a little country churchyard. No monument marked the spot; only a marble slab, with an iron cross resting uprightly in the center. There were no flowers to adorn it. No one ever visited it—it was forgotten, neglected and unnoticed.

Oh! a mother's grave! It is indeed a sacred spot. Who has stood by the grave of a mother and not remembered her smiles, kind words and assurance expressed in a dying hour.

She rebuked her foster-parents for deceiving her by concealing the sad fate and abandoned grave of her unfortunate mother. They had told her that she had died at sea and was buried in the deep waters. Now she knew everything. Her heart was filled with compassion, and only wished to make any sacrifice for her poor thoughtless and inconsiderate parents.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

“To the faithful, one reward is certain.”

“Edna, dearest, why do you choose to leave us? Think of the life you will live. Think of the days, years spent in seclusion. Nothing but grave nuns around you. It is foolish, absurd. Nothing but prayer, religion only,” recited Helen in unison with the other girls who had come to dissuade Edna from her purpose.

“Hush, Helen, you speak thoughtlessly. Nothing can turn me from my purpose. I am carrying it out with the assent of reason, the approval of my conscience and sober judgment. It has been my vehement desire, since I finished school at the convent, inspired by hope and intense resolve, to pray and to work for the salvation of souls. To live such a life is a peerless privilege, no matter at what cost of pain or unremitting toil.”

“But, remember, dear girl,” said Ruby, another friend, “think of the misery, the regret and remorse.

Then it will be too late. I cannot see how you will be happy away from everything you love, excluded from real life, a life of joy and happiness."

"Oh! Ruby, you doubtless do not know what you have said. 'Excluded from real life'? Dearest, do you mean to say that the life of to-day, as it is being lived, is real? Oh! dear girl, think; look around you and see the misery, hardship, discontent, deceit and unhappiness on every side. Dear girls, it is the mind that makes the heart rich. Real happiness is with God. Days, years spent to serve Him will never be regretted. I will never know remorse when I feel confident that my God will answer my prayer and reward my good deeds."

"Well, not for me," said Agnes, another friend. "I detest loneliness and extreme religion. That's too much of a good thing. Give me freedom. Give me pleasures, good times. That's happiness. We live but once, and I'm going to stay with it."

"Agnes, dear, you mean to say that I shall not find pleasure and happiness in my new life? Oh! silly girl, where do we find happiness? Now, answer me, all of you," demanded Edna.

But no one replied. They knew not. They had never given a thought to this question, "the source of happiness."

"Happiness, dear girls, is in doing one's duty. We

all have good and bad in us, and duty gains its victory by peace and tranquillity of mind. Happiness does not consist of things, but lies beyond that. Created things cannot satisfy the desire of our soul. Happiness is sure to be the reward of the one who knows his duty and does it, regardless of what others say, or of the immediate results flowing from thence. There is happiness in conscious recitude, a pleasure in the approval of one's own mind, in comparison with which the treasures of earth are not worth mentioning."

The girls readily saw that it was useless to argue with Edna, as she was firm and had fully decided to carry out this "mad project," as they called it.

At the door they met Harold. He, too, had come to beseech Edna to change her intention. Edna noticed him, and extended both hands, smiling and saying: "Dear old friend, I am glad to see you."

Harold, in an ecstasy of joy, embraced her and printed a fervent kiss upon her lips. She painfully and gently released herself from his fond embrace, speaking from her heart: "Harold, you will not miss me. Some one else will take my place."

"Edna, my love, my all, speak not this way. You shall not forsake me. You must listen to reason. What has gotten hold of you, little girl?" and he held her directly facing him. "You do not seem to under-

stand that I love you. You have promised to be my wife! Because of the misfortunes of your parents do you wish to blight your life and mine?"

She revolted at the remark about her parents' misfortunes. "No," answered she, "their misfortunes have not blighted our lives, but the knowledge of them has incited me with a desire and feeling to live a life of purity, a life of sacrifice."

"Hush! I say you are blind, and cannot see the true aim of life. Do you wish to imply that you believe there is no purity in married life? That there is no sacrifice in wedded life?"

"Oh, Harold, you misunderstand my meaning. I state, emphatically, that doing one's duty in life, whether married or single, fulfills the requirements of the law of God. But my heart, my soul and conscience call me to devote my life to charity, and to pray for the departed souls who failed to do their duty in this world of struggle and strife. Harold, old friend, go into the busy world. Do your duty in the love and fear of God, and I feel justified in saying that you will be happy. We are not married yet. The remembrance of my vow and sacrifice should inspire you. It should remind you that 'God is our Master Divine and Supreme.' He guides and directs our course in this life. Also remember, dear friend, that you will have a place in my prayers, and some day

perhaps we shall meet in the home which our Heavenly Father has prepared for us. Good-by, Harold," and she pressed his hand tightly and smiled pleasantly.

He pressed her hand and gradually loosened it, as she slowly left the room. He was full of pain and disappointment. How could he forget?

Finally, he left the room—went away into the world to forget and love again.

Edna was now an heiress, immensely wealthy; her father's fabulous wealth was all hers now. But what cared she for it? She said: "I shall distribute it all among the poor and suffering." She consequently ordered Lewis to make donations to several asylums and orphanages, reserving a large amount for the erection of a beautiful chapel at the convent, which she was about to enter.

Next to the consolation of divine grace, it is the most sovereign balm to the miseries of life, both in the one who is the object of benevolence and in him who exercises it.

The chapel was her recreation abode. Kneeling at the foot of the mammoth crucifix erected at the left of the sanctuary, there alone (à genoux) she invoked God to have mercy on her poor parents, lifted her head towards Heaven, with tears in her anxious eyes and a prayer in her heart, living in hope of some

day meeting her loved ones in the Home of Blessedness.

Her prayers flew on angel's wings to the throne of God, and returned to her struggling heart a precious benison of inspiration to go forth with her good works.

"Sans Dieu rien."

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

“He that shoots at the stars may hurt himself, but not danger them.”

Three years later Harold Lansing is at home with his much irritated and narrow-minded wife.

She had been informed that he was once on the verge of marrying a notorious woman, who repented and became a nun. She never fails to remind him of the “disgrace,” as she called it. She had a terrible abhorrence for these hypocritical nuns, and disgusting Catholic principles, as she termed them. She could not argue sensibly. It had been instilled in her to always hate and despise anything Catholic, and it is needless to say that she availed herself of the teachings and false accusations.

“But, my dear, why do you speak so cruelly and display your ignorance in such a manner as to bring naught but ridicule and shame upon us? You ought not to slander people as you do.”

“You are lying,” said she; “shut up, I say. I know

you still love Edna Russell, that devilish sort of a saint," she continued, laughing. "Oh, she is so holy and meek. It is all nonsense, nothing but deceit and corruption, that's what it is."

"Carrie, it is evident that you are weak and have an evil nature. Listen to me: I forbid you to bring up this subject again. I do not care to have you defame any one."

"Oh, yes," said she, "your lost love. You married me because you couldn't get her. It is all through spite, eh? But don't you fool yourself by believing that I am going to stand for it, no sir!"

"Why speak evil of another. Remember, we all have our faults, and if we expect charity from the world we must be charitable ourselves."

Along with time circumstances developed; Harold and Carrie became very unhappy. Their home was the scene of unpleasantness. There was no longer peace, only open discord remained.

"Remember, my dear readers, homes do not consist of only material things. It is not the magnificent dwelling, expensive furniture, classy automobiles, that make a home. No, a true and ideal home is a heart-home, where virtue lives and love-flowers bloom, and peace rules. The children will love such a home, and when far away on life's rough journey they will look back to that peaceful home and regret

that they ever left it, and like the tired pilgrim, will again turn their wistful eyes, filled with eternal longing, towards it.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

“Innocence and Charity.”

“Yellow fever! An epidemic! The whole city is doomed!” were the exclamations of everyone.

Many deaths were reported. Yet everything was being done to keep it from spreading. All efforts were useless; every day was worse, and things became darker. More deaths! Many more new cases!

“Nurses! Nurses!” was the cry. “We need nurses; who will volunteer?”

Large sums were offered, but very few responded. The situation was critical!

Even the home of Harold was not spared from the dreadful scourge. He was taken suddenly with the fever; his wife followed. They were left alone; only an old colored mammy had remained, and tried in every possible way to relieve them, but it was too much. The poor old soul did not understand. She was too busy looking after the little two-year-old baby, who fortunately so far had escaped the plague.



In conformity with their teachings many nuns volunteered to go out and administer to the sick and try to cheer them in their agony and trials.

And it so happened that Edna, now known as Sister Dolores, was assigned to Harold's home.

She, without a murmur, obeyed, and arriving at the death-stricken household, found Harold unconscious. No hope was entertained for his recovery. Carrie was sinking gradually, and she also was doomed.

"At last!" sighed Sister Dolores, with joy in her heart, "I shall be able to do my share." The old affection and sympathy were again aroused. She had thought she would never see him again. But God had been merciful and she had been sent to relieve him and pray at his death-bed.

Harold raved and called. He spoke quietly only at intervals, repeating in his delirium: "Edna, yes, my dearest Edna, I am lost, gone forever." Giving way to sobs, he slowly continued: "Yes, my wife and I are lost, Edna. Edna, where are you? We shall soon leave this cruel world, and you, you, Edna, who sacrificed everything, must take unto your charge our little Edna and rear her, dearest, in the fear of God. Let her be with you forever. Please, please save her—she bears your name."

Sister Dolores softly whispered to him: "Let us be

patient in sickness. Everything will end well, God will forgive us."

"God, oh my God! send her to me, dear Lord. I need her." He struggled madly, heaved a final sigh, and with a peaceful smile on his feverish lips entered into that sleep from which there is no awakening.

Sister Dolores knelt at his bedside, clasped her chaplet in her hands, and lifting her face to Heaven, fervently prayed, "Father, have mercy on his soul."

The following day Carrie died in the ministering arms of the comforting nun.

Sister Dolores took little Edna to the convent with the determination that she would devote her life to the little angel.

The child became inseparably attached to Sister Dolores, who could always be seen gleefully playing and amusing little Edna under the wide-spreading oaks, swinging up, up among the branches, amid peals of childish laughter.

"Great souls make all affections great; they elevate and consecrate all true delights."

Charity, the real law of life
The link that connects earth with Heaven.

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